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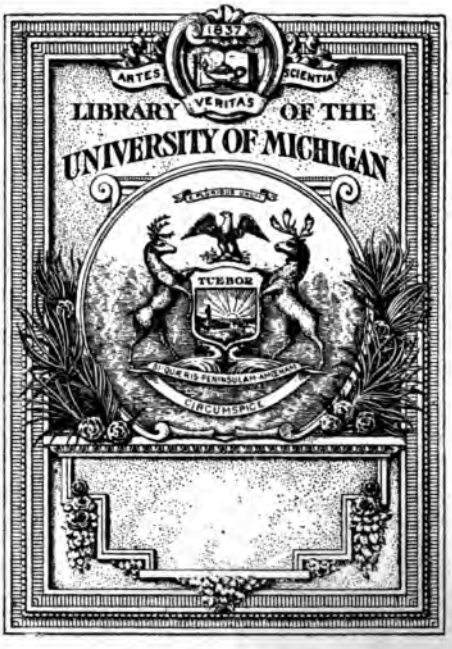
MORE PORTMANTEAU PLAYS

BY

STUART WALKER



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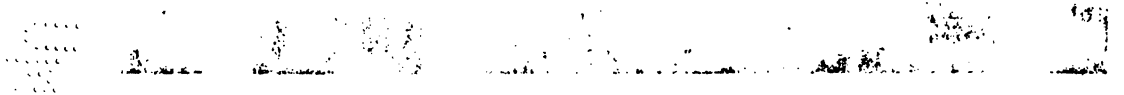

STUART WALKER WITH THE WORKING MODEL OF HIS PORTMANTEAU THEATRE

MORE PORTMANTEAU PLAYS

BY

STUART WALKER
Author of Portmanteau Plays

Edited, and with an Introduction by
EDWARD HALE BIERSTADT

ILLUSTRATED

CINCINNATI
STEWART & KIDD COMPANY
1919

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

During the period which has elapsed between the publication of *Portmanteau Plays,* and that of the present volume our country entered upon the greatest war in history, and emerged victorious. It is far too early to estimate what effect that war has had or may have upon all art in general, and upon the dramatic and theatric arts in particular, but there is every indication that the curtain is about to rise on the great romantic revival which we have watched and waited for, and of which Stuart Walker has been one of the major prophets.

During the actual period of the war many of the creative and interpretative artists of the theater were engaged either directly in army work or in one of its auxiliary branches. It is amusing to recall that the present writer met Schuyler Ladd serving as Mess Sergeant for a Base Hospital in France, Alexander Wollcott, late dramatic critic of the New York *Times,* attached to the *Stars and Stripes* in Paris, and Douglas Stuart, the London producer, in an English hospital at Etretat, the while he himself was serving as an enlisted man on the staff of the same hospital. These are minor instances, but when they have been multiplied several hundred times one begins to see how closely the actor, the critic, and the producer were involved in the struggle. Again the problem of providing proper entertainment for the troops was, and still is, a serious one. In the great number of cases it seems highly prob-

able that the entertainment along such lin s done by the men themselves was far more fective than that provided by outside organi ations. More than once, however, it appeared to the writer that here was a field especially suited to the *Portmanteau Theater* and to its repertory. The question of transportation, always a crucial point with such a venture, was no more difficult than that presented by many companies already in the field, and doing immensely inferior work. My return to America put me in possession of the facts of the matter, and without desiring in any way to cast blame, much less to indict, or to emphasize unduly a relatively unimportant point, it seems only fitting that there should be included in this record the reasons for what has seemed to many of us a lost opportunity. They are at least much more brief than the apologia which precedes them.

The *Portmanteau Theater,* its repertory of forty-eight plays, and its trained company, was offered for war purposes under the following conditions: no royalty was to be paid for any of the plays, no salary was to be paid Mr. Walker; the company was to go wherever sent, whether in or out of shell fire, in France or in England; the only stipulation being that the members of the company should be remunerated at the same rate paid an enlisted man in the United States army, and that the principal members should receive the pay of subalterns. On the whole an arrangement so generous that it is almost absurd. To this offer the Y. M. C. A. turned a deaf ear. Their attention was concentrated on vaudeville at the

moment, and with one hand they covered their eyes while with the other they clutched their purse strings. The War Camp Community Service could see no way in which the Theater could function for the men either at home or abroad. The *Portmanteau* was, in a word, too "high-brow" a venture for them. The reader is referred to the Appendix of this volume showing the repertory in use at that time. Another official contented himself with the statement that the problem of transportation involved rendered the project impracticable. The matter is too lengthy to discuss here, but the writer, who was able to observe the situation at first hand, knows this to be an error. The navy then asked for plans and estimates so that a number of *Portmanteau Theaters* might be constructed aboard the ships. Mr. Walker offered to put all his patents at the complete disposal of the Navy Department, and himself was ready to draw plans and make suggestions. The navy approved the idea, and with sublime assurance requested Mr. Walker to proceed with the work of construction — at his own expense. It was impossible; the money could not be afforded, and the venture was abandoned. It is therefore very evident that there was an opportunity, and that that opportunity was lost; but it was not the *Portmanteau* which lost it. At any rate we are left free to take up the history of Mr. Walker's theater and his plays at the point where we left off in the first book of the series.

The close of the highly successful season at the *Princess Theater* in New York, the winter of 1915–1916, was followed by twelve weeks on the

road, three of which were spent in Chicago, and then by thirteen weeks in Indianapolis. It was in this last city that the production of the adaptation of Booth Tarkington's book, "Seventeen," changed all plans by its instant popularity. On the way East, a stop was made in Chicago, and before that city had time to do much more than voice its enthusiasm, the company left for New York. During the fall of 1917 *Seventeen* was played regularly, with the addition of some special performances of the repertory. *Seventeen* was played in New York for two hundred and fifty-eight performances (Chicago had already had one hundred), and the special performances of *The Book of Job* were renewed in the spring. It was during the next fall, that of 1918, that a second *Seventeen* company was sent out on the road. That company is still out, the total playing time for the work since its production being (April, 1919) just one hundred and four weeks. The next summer, 1918, included a repertory season of thirteen weeks, again at Indianapolis, and four in Cincinnati, while the following winter, just past, claimed ten weeks of repertory at the *Punch and Judy Theater* in New York. To sum up in brief then — Mr. Walker has, beginning in the spring of 1916 and ending in the spring of 1919, played seventy-six weeks of repertory, in which he has produced forty-eight plays. This does not include the *Seventeen* run which, as I have said, totals one hundred and four weeks to date. It is safe to claim that this represents as successful repertory work as has been done in the

United States so far. We shall, however, return to that presently.

In the fall of 1917, so important to the Portmanteau company, a change of management was instituted, by which the following staff came into control: Stage Director — Gregory Kelly: Stage Manager — Morgan Farley: Musical Director — Michel Bernstein: Manager — Harold Holstein: Press Representative — Alta May Coleman: Treasurer — Walter Herzbrun. The changes were excellent, and were thoroughly justified in their results. An arrangement was made with the Shuberts, whereby booking was greatly facilitated, and with its structure thus reinforced, the Theater was in an excellent position to " carry on."

It may be remembered by those who read the first book of the *Portmanteau Series* that in my introduction I placed the greater portion of my emphasis on the theatrical side; that is, the *Portmanteau* as a portable theater rather than as a repertory company. It is my intention here to reverse the process, and this for two reasons. First: Mr. Walker has in the last two years by no means confined himself to the *Portmanteau* stage. The recent run at the *Punch and Judy Theater* in New York was upon a full size stage, and this was not at all an exception. The *Portmanteau* was, and is, an idea, but that idea has no very definite connection with repertory as such. There is no longer the need, in this particular instance, that there once was, for the invariable use of the *Portmanteau*, except as convenience re-

quires. At the very beginning, when the company often played for private persons, the portable stage was indispensable. But so thoroughly did the *Portmanteau* idea justify itself that from being a crutch it grew into a handy staff, always valuable, but no longer essential. All that has been said of it, and of its possibilities, is quite as true today as ever it was, but now having proved his original thesis, if so it may be called, Mr. Walker may well be content to work out the future gradually and in his own way. Second: the repertory idea is certainly of infinitely more importance than any theatrical device or contrivance, however interesting and valuable such a departure may be in itself. As to any difference in the acting necessitated by the change from a small to a large stage that amounts to little. It is entirely a difference in quality, an ability to temper the interpretation to the surroundings, and as such would apply as readily to the staging and setting of a play as to the acting itself. On a large stage one might take three steps to convey an impression where on a small stage one step would produce the same effect. An arch or pylon would obviously have to be of greater proportions on a large stage than on a small one. Yet in both these instances the ultimate effect is precisely the same. Let us turn then to a consideration of the Portmanteau, not as a theater, but as a repertory company.

There is certainly no space here, and just as certainly no necessity, for dwelling long upon the prime importance of repertory. Several excellent books have been written on that absorbing subject,

and we may surely take for granted that which we know beyond all doubt to be the truth, namely, that repertory as opposed to the "long run" and to the "star" system is the ultimate solution of a most vexatious and perplexing problem — how to change the modern theater from an industry to an art. The disadvantages of the present mode of procedure are too evident to call for recapitulation; witness the results obtained. On the other hand there can be no question that there is a practicable and simple panacea in repertory; see what has been done by the Abbey company in Dublin, by Miss Horniman's players in Manchester, by the *Scottish Repertory Theater,* on a smaller scale, in Glasgow, by John Drinkwater's repertory theater in Birmingham, concerning which I have, unfortunately, no exact data, but which I understand is doing remarkable work with distinct success, and by the Portmanteau company in the United States. It would be well also to include Charles Frohman's season at the *Duke of York's Repertory Theater* in London; in fact the inclusion of this seventeen weeks' season would be inevitable. Where the experiment has failed it has failed for reasons which did not, in any way, shape or manner, invalidate the principle at stake. Thus, to cite the great example on our own side of the water, the *New Theater* was doomed to failure from the very start in the fact that it was born crippled. It may be restated to advantage, just here, that from the spring of 1916 to the spring of 1919, a period of three years, Mr. Walker has produced forty-eight plays, has given seventy-six weeks of repertory, and has had a nearly un-

broken run of one hundred and four weeks with one play which has been commercially successful beyond the others. Of the forty-eight plays produced during this time eighteen had never been seen before on any stage; four were entirely new to America (except for a possible itinerant amateur performance); and twenty-six were revivals, modern, semi-modern, and classical. It is my belief that this record will take a creditable position in the history of American repertory. Abroad, however, its place is less secure, but even here the *Portmanteau* is by no means snowed under.

In the other great English speaking country there are four outstanding examples of repertory work, as has already been stated. On the Continent the situation is entirely different; there is no "problem" there, for the repertory theater has long been an established fact. France, in the *Comedié-Française,* and Germany, in several of her theaters before the war, merely provide us with a criterion. In Great Britain, however, and in America, we are in the process of building and adjusting, so that the examples of one will reasonably affect the other. At the risk of being misunderstood we shall pause long enough to call attention to the *Irving Place Theatre,*[1] of New York, a German house supporting German plays, and attended very largely by a German clientele, but notwithstanding all this a repertory theater of standing, and of some distinction, from which we might learn several useful lessons. However, it

[1] Since America's entrance in the War given over to the "movies."

is with the Anglo-American stage that we have to do at the moment.

Doubtless, first in importance comes the Abbey Theater Company of Dublin. From December, 1905, to December, 1912, there were produced at the *Abbey Theater* (I am unfortunately unable to include the several important tours made) seventy-four plays, of which seven were translations. Of the rest but few were revivals, as the history of the Irish literary movement will show. They were plays written especially for the theater, for particular audiences, and to achieve definite purpose as propaganda. Moreover, when the *Abbey* was tottering on the brink of failure, Miss Horniman came to the rescue with a substantial subsidy which enabled the theater not only to proceed, but finally to establish itself on a sound running basis. Mr. Walker's company has had to fight its own way from the very start.

In Manchester, Miss Horniman's own repertory company at the *Midland Theater* and finally at the *Gaiety* has been distinctly and brilliantly successful. In a period of a little more than two years there were produced fifty-five plays; twenty-eight new, seventeen revivals of modern English plays, five modern translations, and five classics. This is a repertory as well balanced as it is wide. In 1910, however, there was inaugurated the practise of producing each play for a run of one week, so that from that time on the theater was open to the criticism of being not a repertory in the fullest sense of the term, but a short run theater. But for that matter, I do not think that there is a repertory theater either in England or in

America which fulfills the ideal conditions set down by William Archer who had in mind, as he wrote, the repertory theater of the Continent.

"When we speak of a repertory, we mean a number of plays always ready for performance, with nothing more than a 'run through' rehearsal, which, therefore, can be, and are, acted in such alternation that three, four or five different plays may be given in the course of a week. New plays are from time to time added to the repertory, and those of them which succeed may be performed fifty, seventy, a hundred times, or even more, in the course of one season; but no play is ever performed more than two or three times in uninterrupted succession." [1]

This applies exactly to the *Comedié-Française*, which, in the year 1909, presented one hundred and fifteen plays, eighteen of which were per-

[1] Mr. John Palmer, in his book, "The Future of the Theater," gives the following as the programme for the then, 1913, projected National Theater. The war intervened, however, and the venture has been lost sight of for the moment. This statement is even more reasonable than that of Mr. Archer, for this is intended for practical use in England while his was merely taken from France.

"... it seems desirable to state that a repertory theater should be held to mean a theater able to present at least two different plays of full length at evening performances in each completed week during the annual season, and at least three different plays at evening performances and matinées taken together ... and the number of plays presented in a year should not be less than twenty-five. A play of full length means a play occupying at least two-thirds of the whole time of any performance. But two two-act plays, or three one-act plays, composing a single programme, should, for the purposes of this statute, be reckoned as equivalent to a play of full length."

As Mr. Palmer remarks "this statute is both elastic and watertight."

E. H. B.

formed for the first time, the remainder being a part of the regular body of the repertory of that theater. In the first decade of the present century there were no less than two hundred and eighty-two plays added to the repertory of the *Comedié*. It may be of service to remember, however, that the *Comedié-Française* was established by royal decree in 1680. If the *Globe Theater* of Shakespeare's day had lived and prospered up to the present we might have an example to match that of France.

It is probable that if one were to use the phrase "repertory in America" the wise ones of the theater would raise their eye-brows stiffly and remark, "There is none." That would be nearly true, but not altogether so. It is my desire here to sketch in brief the early beginnings of what has been termed the "independent theater" movement,[1] from which repertory in this country unquestionably grew, up to the time of the establishment of the "little theaters" which now dot the country, and into which movement that of the "independent theater" eventually merged.

In 1887 there was inaugurated by A. M. Palmer at the *Madison Square Theater,* of which he was manager at that time, a series of "author's matinées" which appear to have been in some sense try-outs for a possible repertory season. Only three plays were produced, however, before Mr. Palmer decided against the scheme as impracticable. It is interesting to note that these three plays were all by American authors — Howells, Matthews, and Lathrop. The attempt was

[1] See Appendix for complete repertories.

actually not repertory in the strict sense, but it undoubtedly marks a tendency, slight, but evident, to incline in the right direction.

Some four years later, in the fall of 1891, a Mr. McDowell, son of General McDowell of Civil War fame, started the *Theater of Arts and Letters* with the idea of bringing literature and the drama into closer relationship. Five plays were produced, and among the names of the authors (again they were all natives) one finds several which have since become famous. Commercially, the venture was a total failure, and the authors did not even collect their full royalties. A short tour was made with several of the more successful plays, one by Clyde Fitch (a one-act which was afterwards expanded into *The Moth and the Flame*), one by Richard Harding Davis, and one by Brander Matthews. All three of these were one-act. American authors were willing enough to write plays, but they apparently could not succeed, except in isolated instances, in writing good ones. There was evidently an utter dearth of suitable material. Nevertheless, when foreign plays were put on no better fortune ensued, unless they represented the old school of pseudo melodrama, and farce adapted from the French and German, such as Augustin Daly delighted in. Daly too had discovered that to encourage the American playwright was to court disaster.

In 1897 *The Criterion*, a New York review of rather eccentric merit, endeavored to establish the *Criterion Independent Theater* modeled on the *Théâtre-Libre* of Antoine. A company was recruited, headed by E. J. Henley, and performances

were given at first the *Madison Square Theater,* and then the *Berkeley Lyceum.* It was frankly intended that the appeal should be to a small, select audience, and, in spite of the jeers of the press, five plays were produced — one Norwegian, one Italian, one French, one Spanish, and one American. A glance through the list shows us that the American play, by Augustus Thomas, is the only one which has not since entered into the permanent literature of the stage. Internal differences, and imperfect rehearsals combined to overthrow the venture which, after one season, was abandoned. The success of the last production, however, *El Gran Galeoto,* inspired Mr. John Blair to produce Ibsen's *Ghosts* with Miss Mary Shaw at the *Carnegie Lyceum* in 1899. From this sprang *The Independent Theater,* generously backed financially by Mr. George Peabody Eustis of Washington.

The list of the patrons of this theater reads like a chapter from "Who's Who." Many of the men associated with the plan gave their services free or at a nominal cost. The three persons more directly responsible for the artistic side of the work were Charles Henry Meltzer, John Blair, and Vaughan Kester, while among the patrons were W. D. Howells, Bronson Howard, E. C. Stedman, E. H. Sothern, Charles and Daniel Frohman, and Sir Henry Irving. Six plays were given, this time none of them of American origin. The press and critics were most bitter in their denunciation of these foreign importations, as they had been on the previous occasion. There was, however, on the part of the audiences a defi-

nite tendency to let drop the scales from their eyes, and to awake to the new forces in the drama and the theater as represented by Ibsen, Hervieu, the *Théâtre-Libre,* and the *Independent Theater.* But in spite of all this, one season's work saw the conclusion of the project. A part of the repertory was given in other cities, notably Boston and Washington, but, though a very real interest was aroused, it was not sufficient to permit the company to continue. About two thousand dollars represented the deficit at the end of the season; by no means a discreditable balance, albeit on the wrong side of the ledger, when one considers the circumstances. The actual results of the work are summed up in a privately printed pamphlet written by Mr. Meltzer than whom no one was more closely in touch with the whole independent movement.

"What have the American 'Independents' achieved by their efforts?

"They have succeeded, thanks to Mr. George Peabody Eustis, the general manager of the scheme, in giving twenty-two performances of plays recognized everywhere abroad as characteristic, interesting, and literary.

"They have extended the 'Independent' movement from New York to Boston and Washington.

"They have encouraged at least one 'regular' manager to announce the production next season of an Ibsen play.

"They have revived discussion of the general tendencies of modern drama.

"They have interested, and occasionally charmed, an intelligent minority of playgoers,

who have grown weary of the rank insipidity, vulgarity, and improbability of current drama.

"They have bored, angered, and distressed a less intelligent majority of playgoers and critics.

"They have discovered at least one new actress of unusual worth.

"They have prepared the way, at a by no means inconsiderable cost of time, thought, and money, for future, and perhaps, more prosperous movements aiming at the reform of the American stage."

Coming at the time it did, sponsored by the best minds in America, and worked to its conclusion by whole hearted enthusiasts, *The Independent Theater* did, beyond all doubt, have a very vitalizing effect on both the stage and the drama of this country. The next step, perhaps the climactic one of the series, was longer in coming (1909).

The *New Theater* has been our greatest attempt and our greatest failure. The details of these two seasons have been placed before the public so many times that there is no necessity for doing more here than suggesting a broad outline. If the enterprise had, from its very inception, been in the hands of capable men who knew their work, instead of being handicapped by wealthy amateurs the history of a failure might never have been written. In its first season *The New Theater* presented thirteen plays at intervals of a fortnight. Of these, four were classics, three were original works by native authors, and two by contemporary British dramatists. During the second season, at the end of which the idea was given up and the *New Theater* abandoned, eleven

plays were produced; six of these were of British origin, semi-modern; one was a classic; three were Belgian, and one was American. I have counted in this season, two plays produced the season before, the only revivals. Altogether then, twenty-two plays were given, only five of which can be considered as home products. Mr. Ames, the Director, was balked at every turn by the combined forces of Fifth Avenue and Wall Street, while the outrageous and impossible construction of the theater itself proved an insurmountable handicap. In addition it was now found almost impossible to induce the American dramatist to turn from the great profits of the long run Broadway theaters to the acceptance of one hundred and fifty dollars a performance at the *New Theater*. There was something to be said on both sides. The *New Theater* was a splendid and costly attempt, and it taught us several invaluable lessons, chief among them the occasional unimportance of money.

Probably next in order comes the short repertory of Miss Grace George at the *Playhouse* in 1915 and 1917. This lasted for about one season and a half, and, while there was promise of continuation, the project was finally abandoned. It is only fair to say that Miss George worked under the peculiar disadvantage of entire lack of sympathy, and indeed, open antagonism as well, on the part of several of her most important confréres. The real trouble seemed to be one of those that affected the *New Theater*, that is, Miss George was totally unable to secure American plays for her purposes. In the period of

her project she produced seven plays; five the first year, and two the next. Of these, five were modern British plays, one was a translation from the French, and one was semi-modern American. Again it will be observed that American plays were simply not forthcoming, a condition widely different from that obtaining during the nineties when the *Theater of Arts and Letters*, and the *Criterion Independent* held their short sway. Miss George's effort was distinctly worth while, but in the end there was added only another gravestone to the cemetery of buried hopes.[1]

With the advent of the "little theater" movement, from about 1905, there are many small companies and theaters which can, in a broad sense, fairly be termed repertory. To discuss any number of them would require a book in itself, and the reader is referred to "*The Insurgent Theater*" by Professor Dickenson as the work most nearly fulfilling this need. Probably the *Washington Square Players* of New York are typical, more or less, of them all, and their repertory for two years is given in the Appendix. Aside from the natural conditions resulting from the war, one reason of their failure seems to have been their pernicious desire to be "different" at any cost. In spite of their excellent work they ultimately found that cost to be prohibitive, but the discovery was made too late.[2] The majority of the little theaters are, however, too en-

[1] Announcement has just been made that Miss George will continue her repertory during the season of 1919–1920.

[2] They only failed for $3000, however: the rent of a Broadway theater for a week.

tirely provincial in their appeal to warrant an assumption of any great influence, in spite of their vital and unquestionable importance.[1]

It will be observed that in speaking of Stuart Walker's work I have used the phrase repertory *company,* not, repertory *theater.* That is, of course, part of the secret. A theater anchored to one spot is obviously at a disadvantage. It cannot seek its audience, but must sit with what patience and capital it has at its disposal, and wait for the audience to come to it. With a touring company the odds are more even. An unsuccessful month in one city may be made up by a successful one in another. The type of play that captivates the west may not go at all in the east, and the other way about. There are plays now on the road, and which have been there literally for years, doing excellent business, which have never ventured to storm the very rocky coast bounding New York. And there are plays which have had crowded houses in the metropolis which have slumped, and deservedly so, most dismally when they were taken out where audiences were possessed of a clearer vision. Hence it is easy to see that Mr. Walker, playing in both the east and the west, in small cities and in large ones, can do what the *New Theater* and the *Playhouse* could not do. True, they could send their companies out on tour, but the *New Theater* with its huge stage and panoramic scenery could find but

[1] This statement hardly applies to *The Neighborhood Theater,* or to that successor to *The Washington Square Players, The Theater Guild,* the work of which at the *Garrick Theater,* New York, during the first part of 1919 has been excellent in the very highest degree.

few theaters which could house it, and the whole idea of both that and Miss George's company was a fixed repertory theater. Indeed in both of them the faults of the "star" system were never wholly absent.

The facts that I have been able to give here seem to point to but one conclusion. That is, that Stuart Walker's repertory company stands numerically on a par with anything else of the kind ever attempted in the United States, and that it is not unworthy of comparison with the best repertory work in England. It must be borne in mind that, in some measure, all this has been done on a fairly small scale. There has not been the money at hand to do it otherwise, nor has there been the necessity. The company may be compared better with the *Gaiety* of Manchester than with the *Duke of York's Theater*. And too, as with the *Gaiety*, many of the players have been relatively unknown before their advent on the *Portmanteau* stage. It is the definite mission, or some part of it at any rate, of the repertory company to encourage new dramatists, new players, and new stage effects when such encouragement is advisable. To be merely different is by no means to be worth while.

The three plays included in this volume have all been presented successfully both in the east and in the west. The two long plays — *The Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree* and *Jonathan Makes a Wish* — both have the distinction of being popular with audiences and unpopular with critics, a condition of affairs not as unique as it might seem. As for the third, *The Very Naked Boy*, it is a thor-

oughly delightful trifle, unimportant as drama, yet very perfect in itself, and has been liked by nearly everyone. Combining, as it does, comedy and sentiment, it possesses all the elements that go to make for success with the average audience.

The Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree is founded on an old Japanese legend, how old no one knows. Mr. Walker became interested in Japanese folk-lore through a collection of ballads; it is amusing to observe how his fondness for ballads has followed him through all his work, and this play was the result. From the first it went well. Apparently no one could resist the pathos of the intensely human story which culminated in so tragic a form. One might think that the appeal in a play of this type, written by an author so well known as an artist in stage-craft, would be largely visual. While that appeal is unquestionably there in abundance, the real essence of the tale is the vitally human quality of its characters. One is indeed inclined to believe that we take our pleasures sadly, when he has seen an audience quite dissolved in tears at a performance of this play, and all the while enjoying themselves unutterably. It is a drama of imagination and of emotion. The cold, hard, and more often than not deceiving light of the intellect plays but a small part. It is the human heart with its passions, its fears, its regrets, and its aspirations that concerns us here; not the human mind with its essentially microcosmic point of view, and its petty, festering egoism. The play is beautiful because it is true, and equally it is true because it is beautiful. It seems to me quite the best and soundest

piece of work Mr. Walker has done so far, though he himself prefers his later play, *Jonathan Makes a Wish.*

This last play is more realistic — stupid term! — than anything of a serious nature that the author has so far attempted. It is, however, the realism of Barrie rather than that of Brieux, and this at any rate is consoling. The first act is extraordinary, splendid in thought, in technique, and in execution. Therein lies the trouble, if trouble there be. Neither of the two acts following can reach the level of the first, and with the opening of the second act the play gradually, though hardly perceptibly, declines,. not in interest, but in strength. The transposition of the character of the Tramp from an easy going good nature in the first act to that of a Dickens villain in the second may require explanation. The last sensation the boy has is that of the blow on his head, and his last visualization is that of the Tramp's face bending over him. Thus, in his delirium, the two would inevitably be associated. The story of the delirium, the second act, is peculiarly well done. One feels the slight haziness of outline, the great consequence of actually inconsequential events, the morbid terror lurking always in the near background, which are a very part and parcel of that strange psychological condition which is here made to play a spiritual part. The last act suffers for want of material. In reality, all that is necessary is to wind up the play speedily and happily. It seems probable that the introduction of the deliciously charming Frenchwoman, played so delightfully by Margaret Mower, would give

the needed color and substance to this portion. As it is, one feels a little something lacking — but only a little. That the play is, as one pseudo-critic remarked, an argument in favor of infant playwrights, is too absurd to discuss. If it argues at all, it is that the relationship between the child world and the adult must be democratic, not tyrannic, and that flowers grow, like weeds, only when they are encouraged, not trod upon. The play is interesting, true, and imaginative to a degree; if it is not wholly satisfactory, it but partakes of the faults of virtue. Audiences, young, old, metropolitan and urban, have responded to the work in a manner which left no doubt of their approval. In New York it was slow in taking hold, and unfortunately the company was obliged to leave to fill other engagements just at the time when a more definite success was at hand. In the west the spirit of the thing caught at once; there was no hesitation there.

From the beginning there has been a very definite plan in Mr. Walker's mind as to what his objective point was to be, and especially in view of what I have said of his company in connection with repertory it may be interesting to suggest the outline of that plan here. This is no less than to establish in some city a permanent repertory theater and company, and to use the *Portmanteau Theater* and company for touring purposes. It is an amusing thought; the little theater would shoot out from under the wing of its parent as a raiding party detaches itself from its company, but the consequences would be, one hopes, less destructive on both sides. The thought, however, is really

much more than amusing; it is of very real consequence and importance. It will readily be seen that in this we have a combination of the advantages of both the stationary and the touring repertory company, and hence, double the chances of success. And Mr. Walker would by no means be restricted to one *Portmanteau Theater.* If conditions warranted it he could as easily construct and send out a dozen on the road, taking his work into every nook and corner of the theater-loving country. In fact the ramifications of the idea are so vast that it is useless to endeavor to do more than suggest them here. The reader will see for himself what great possibilities are involved, and what an effect this might have on all repertory work in America.

During the last two years the work of Mr. Walker's company has improved in every way. The addition of new members, such as Margaret Mower, and particularly George Gaul, whose performance in *The Book of Job* was, in my opinion, one of the finest ever seen on the American stage, has naturally served to strengthen the fabric greatly. The older members of the company, Gregory Kelly, McKay Morris, Edgar Stehli and many others, have all improved in their work, increasing in assurance and finish. The success that has attended the fortunes of the theater has made possible finer stage effects (the Dunsany productions have been immensely improved) and the repertory has been greatly enriched by some really fine plays, and has been enhanced by others of a more popular character. One thing must be said, however, in all fairness. It has seemed to the

writer that of late there has been an increasing tendency on the part of Mr. Walker's scenic artists and costume designers to fall away from the plain surfaces and unbroken lines of the new stagecraft, and to achieve an effect which one can only characterize as "spotty." This can best be appreciated by those who know the two American productions of Dunsany's one-act play, *The Tents of the Arabs.* I am rather regretfully of the opinion that, aside from the actual playing and reading of the parts, Sam Hume's production was superior to that of Mr. Walker. An opulence of variegated colors does not always suggest as much as flat masses. The set used by Mrs. Hapgood in her production of Torrence's *Simon the Cyrenian* illustrates excellently the desired result. It is, however, Stuart Walker's privilege to adapt the new ideas, and to make such use of the old, as seems best to him. One is sometimes inclined to miss, nevertheless, the simplicity of his earlier work, especially when it is compared with the splendor, not always well used or well advised, of his later productions. His company has always read beautifully, and its reading is now better than ever. The only adverse criticism, if adverse criticism there be at all, lies against the Stage Director himself. I am especially glad to be able to say this, for the producer whose work is too good, too smooth, is surely stumbling to a fall. The very fact that there is definite room for improvement in the *Portmanteau* presentations, leads one to feel, knowing the record of the company, that these improvements will be made.

To return for a moment to an earlier phase of

our discussion, it may be both interesting and profitable to note the fact that while the *Abbey*, the *Manchester*, and the *New Theaters* were all aided by material subsidies, the *Portmanteau* has stood on its own legs, albeit they wabbled a trifle on occasion, from the very start. A little, but only a little, money has been borrowed, and there has been just one gift, that of $5000. This last was accepted for the reason that it would enable the Theater to mount sets and costume plays in a rather better fashion than heretofore. While it was not absolutely essential to the continued existence of the *Portmanteau* it made presently possible productions which otherwise would have been postponed indefinitely; in British army slang it would be called " bukshee," meaning extra, like the thirteenth cake in the dozen. The record of the *Portmanteau* is its own, and that of its many friends who have been generous in contributing that rarest of all gifts, sympathetic understanding.

Before withdrawing my intrusive finger from the *Portmanteau* pie I should like to pay a small tribute to Stuart Walker himself. I do not think I have ever known a man who gave more unsparingly of himself in all his work. That dragon of the theater, the expense account, has often necessitated someone shouldering the work of half a dozen who were not there. Always it is Mr. Walker who has taken the task upon his back, cheerfully and willingly, and despite physical ills, under which a less determined man would have succumbed. His never wavering belief in his work and his ability to do that work have brought him through many a pitfall. It is not a petty vanity,

but the strong conceit of the artist; that which most of us call by the vague term ideals. The spirit of the *Portmanteau* is to be found alike in its offices and on its stage; a spirit of unselfish belief that somehow, somewhere, we all shall "live happily ever after" if only we do the work we are set to do faithfully here and now. The theater, the organization which has that behind it, in conjunction with a keenly intelligent co-operation or team-play, will take a great deal of punishment before it goes down. Mistakes have been made, of course; otherwise neither producer nor company were human; but it is in the acknowledgment and rectification of errors that men become great.

The repertory theater, the new drama, and stage craft, have an able ally in the *Portmanteau*. We may look far afield for that elixir which will transmute the base metal of the commercial theater to the bright gold of art, but unless we remember that the pot of treasure is to be found at this end of the rainbow, and not the other, our search will be in vain.

EDWARD HALE BIERSTADT.

New York City,
April, 1919.

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E. H. B.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE PORTMANTEAU THEATER

THE PROLOGUE

As the lights in the theater are lowered the voice of MEMORY *is heard as she passes through the audience to the stage.*

MEMORY

Once upon a time, but not so very long ago, you very grown-ups believed in all true things. You believed until you met the Fourteen Doubters who were so positive in their unbelief that you weakly cast aside the things that made you happy for the hapless things that they were calling life. You were afraid or ashamed to persist in your old thoughts, and strong in your folly you discouraged your little boy, and other people's little boys from the pastimes they had loved. Yet all through the early days you had been surely building magnificent cities, and all about you laying out magnificent gardens, and, with an April pool you had made infinite seas where pirates fought or mermaids played in coral caves. Then came the Doubters, laughing and jeering at you, and you let your cities, and gardens, and seas go floating in the air — unseen, unsung — wonderful cities, and gardens, and seas, peopled with the realest of people. . . . So now you, and he, and I are met at the portals. Pass through them with me. I have something there that you think is lost. The key is the tiny regret for the real things, the little regret that sometimes seems to weight

your spirit at twilight, and compress all life into a moment's longing. Come, pass through. You cannot lose your way. Here are your cities, your gardens, and your April pools. Come through the portals of once upon a time, but not so very long ago — today — now!

She passes through the soft blue curtains, but unless you are willing to follow her, turn back now. There are only play-things here.

THE LADY OF THE WEEPING WILLOW TREE

A Play in Three Acts

Characters

O-Sode-San, an old woman
O-Katsu-San
Obaa-San
The Gaki of Kokoru, an eater of unrest
Riki, a poet
Aoyagi

WEEPING WILLOW TREE

ACT I

[*Before the House of Obaa-San. At the right back is a weeping willow tree, at the left the simple little house of Obaa-San.*

[*O-Sode-San and O-Katsu-San enter.*

O-SODE-SAN

Oi! . . . Oi! . . . Obaa-San!

O-KATSU-SAN

Obaa-San! . . . Grandmother!

O-SODE-SAN

She is not there.

O-KATSU-SAN

Poor Obaa-San.

O-SODE-SAN

Why do you always pity Obaa-San? Are her clothes not whole? Has she not her full store of rice?

O-KATSU-SAN

Ay!

O-SODE-SAN

Then what more can one want — a full hand, a full belly, and a warm body!

O-KATSU-SAN

A full heart, perhaps.

O-SODE-SAN

What does Obaa-San know of a heart, silly O-Katsu? She has had no husband to die and leave her alone. She has had no child to die and leave her arms empty.

O-KATSU-SAN

Hai! Hai! She does not know.

O-SODE-SAN
She has had no lover to smile upon her and then — pass on.
O-KATSU-SAN
But Obaa-San is not happy.
O-SODE-SAN
Pss-s!
O-KATSU-SAN
She may be lonely because she has never had any one to love or to love her.
O-SODE-SAN
How could one love Obaa-San? She is too hideous for love. She would frighten the children away — and even a drunken lover would laugh in her ugly face. Obaa-San! The grandmother!
O-KATSU-SAN
O-Sode, might we not be too cruel to her?
O-SODE-SAN
If we could not laugh at Obaa-San, how then could we laugh? She has been sent from the dome of the sky for our mirth.
O-KATSU-SAN
I do not know! I do not know! Sometimes I think I hear tears in her laugh!
O-SODE-SAN
Pss-s! That is no laugh. Obaa-San cackles like an old hen.
O-KATSU-SAN
I think she is unhappy now and then — always, perhaps.
O-SODE-SAN
Has she not her weeping willow tree — the grandmother?

O-KATSU-SAN

Ay. She loves the tree.

O-SODE-SAN

The grandmother of the weeping willow tree! It's well for the misshapen, and the childless, and the loveless to have a tree to love.

O-KATSU-SAN

But, O-Sode, the weeping willow tree can not love her. Perhaps even old Obaa-San longs for love.

O-SODE-SAN

Do we not come daily to her to talk to her? And to ask her all about her weeping willow tree?

O-KATSU-SAN

Oi! Obaa-San.

[*A sigh is heard.*

O-SODE-SAN

What was that, O-Katsu?

O-KATSU-SAN

Someone sighed — a deep, hard sigh.

O-SODE-SAN

Oi! Obaa-San! Grandmother!

[*The sigh is almost a moan.*

O-KATSU-SAN

It seemed to come from the weeping willow tree.

O-SODE-SAN

O-Katsu! Perhaps some evil spirit haunts the tree.

O-KATSU-SAN

Some hideous Gaki! Like the Gaki of Kokoru — the evil ghost that can feed only on the unrest of humans. Their unhappiness is his food. He has to find misery in order to live, and win

his way back once more to humanity. To different men he changes his shape at will, and sometimes is invisible.

O-SODE-SAN

Quick, Katsu, let us go to the shrine — and pray — and pray.

O-KATSU-SAN

Ay. There!

[*They go out. The Gaki appears.*

THE GAKI

Why did you sigh?

THE VOICE OF THE TREE

O Gaki of Kokoru! My heart hangs within me like the weight of years on Obaa-San.

THE GAKI

Why did you moan?

THE TREE

The tree is growing — and it tears my heart.

THE GAKI

I live upon your unrest. Feed me! Feed me!

[*The tree sighs and moans and The Gaki seems transported with joy.*

THE TREE

Please! Please! Give me my freedom.

THE GAKI

Where then should I feed? Unless I feed on your unhappiness I should cease to live — and I must live.

THE TREE

Someone else, perchance, may suffer in my stead.

THE GAKI

I care not where or how I feed. I am in the sixth hell, and if I die in this shape I must re-

main in this hell through all the eternities. One like me must feed his misery by making others miserable. I can not rise through the other five hells to human life unless I have human misery for my food.

THE TREE

Oh, can't you feed on joy — on happiness, on faith?

THE GAKI

Faith? Yes, perhaps — but only on perfect faith. If I found perfect faith — ah, then — I dare not dream.— There is no faith.

THE TREE

Do not make me suffer more. Let me enjoy the loveliness of things.

THE GAKI

Would you have someone else suffer in your stead?

THE TREE

Someone else — someone else —

THE GAKI

Ay — old Obaa-San — she whom they call the grandmother.

[*The Tree moans.*

THE GAKI

She will suffer in your stead.

THE TREE

No! No! She loves me! She of all the world loves me! No — not she!

THE GAKI

It shall be she!

THE TREE

I shall not leave!

THE GAKI

You give me better food than I have ever known. You wait! You wait!

THE TREE

Here comes Obaa-San! Do not let her suffer for me!

THE GAKI

You shall be free — as free as anyone can be — when I have made the misery of Obaa-San complete.

THE TREE

She has never fully known her misery. Her heart is like an iron-bound chest long-locked, with the key lost.

THE GAKI

We shall find the key! We shall find the key!

THE TREE

I shall warn her.

THE GAKI

Try!

THE TREE

Alas! I can not make her hear! I can not tell her anything.

THE GAKI

She can not understand you! She can not see me unless I wish! Earth people never see or hear!

THE TREE

Hai! Hai! Hai!

[*Obaa-San enters. She is old, very, very old, and withered and misshapen. There is only laughter in your heart when you look at Obaa-San unless you see her eyes. Then —*

OBAA-SAN
My tree! My little tree! Why do you sigh?
THE TREE
Hai! Hai! Hai!
OBAA-SAN
Sometimes I think I pity you. Yes, dear tree!
THE TREE
Hai! Hai! Hai!
THE GAKI
Now I am a traveller. She sees me pleasantly. — Grandmother!
OBAA-SAN
Ay, sir!
THE GAKI
Which way to Kyushu?
OBAA-SAN
You have lost your way. Far, far back beyond the ferry landing at Ishiyama to your right. That is the way to Kyushu.
THE GAKI
Ah, me!
OBAA-SAN
You are tired. Will you not sit and rest? — Will you not have some rice?
THE GAKI
Oh, no.— Where is your brood, grandmother?
OBAA-SAN
I have no brood. I am no grandmother. I am no mother.
THE GAKI
What! Are there tears in your voice?
OBAA-SAN
Tears! Why should I weep?

THE GAKI

I do not know, grandmother!

OBAA-SAN

I am no grandmother! — Who sent you here to laugh at me? — O-Sode-San? 'Tis she who laughs at me, because —

THE GAKI

No one, old woman —

OBAA-SAN

Yes, yes, old woman. That is it. Old woman! — Who are you? I am not wont to cry my griefs to any one.

THE GAKI

Griefs? You have griefs?

OBAA-SAN

Ay! Even *I* — she whom they call Obaa-San — have griefs.— Even I! But they are locked deep within me. No one knows!

THE GAKI

Someone must know.

OBAA-SAN

I shall tell no one.

THE GAKI

Someone must know!

OBAA-SAN

You speak like some spirit — and I feel that I must obey.

THE GAKI

Someone must know!

OBAA-SAN

I shall not speak. Who cares? — What is it I shall do? Tell my story — unlock my heart — so that O-Sode-San may laugh and laugh and

laugh. Is it not enough that some evil spirit feeds upon my deep unrest?

THE GAKI

How can one feed upon your unrest when you lock it in your heart? (*The voices of O-Sode-San and O-Katsu-San are heard calling to Obaa-San*) Here come some friends of yours. Tell them your tale.

[*He goes out.*

OBAA-SAN

Strange. I feel that I must speak out my heart.

[*O-Sode-San and O-Katsu-San come in.*

O-SODE-SAN

Good morning, grandmother!

OBAA-SAN (*with a strange wistfulness in her tone*)

Good morning, O-Sode-San. Good morning, O-Katsu-San. May the bright day bring you a bright heart.

O-KATSU-SAN

And you, Obaa-San.

O-SODE-SAN

How is the weeping willow tree, grandmother?

OBAA-SAN

It is there — close to me.

O-SODE-SAN

And does it speak to you, grandmother —

OBAA-SAN

I am no grandmother! I am no grandmother! I am no mother! O-Sode, can you not understand? I am no mother.— I am no wife.— There is no one.— I am only an old woman.— In the spring I see the world turn green and I hear the song of happy birds and feel the perfumed balmy air upon my cheek — and every

spring that cheek is older and more wrinkled and I have always been alone. I see the stars on a summer night and listen for the dawn — and there never has been a strong hand to touch me nor tiny fingers to reach out for me. I have heard the crisp autumn winds fight the falling leaves and I have known that long winter days and nights were coming — and I have always been alone — alone. I have pretended to you — what else could I do? Grandmother! Grandmother! Every time you speak the name, the emptiness of my life stands before me like a royal Kakemono all covered with unliving people.

O-SODE-SAN

You never seemed to care.

OBAA-SAN

Did I not care! Grandmother! Grandmother! Why? Because I loved a weeping willow tree. Because to me it was real. It was my baby. But no lover ever came to woo. No words ever came to me.— Think you, O-Sode-San, that the song of birds in the branches is ease to an empty heart. Think you that the wind amongst the leaves soothes the mad unrest in here. (*She beats her breast*) I have no one — no one. I talk to my weeping willow tree — but there is no answer — no answer, O-Sode-San — only stillness — and yet — sometimes I think I hear a sigh.— Grandmother! Grandmother! There! Is that enough? I've bared my heart to you. Go spread the news — I am lonely and old — old.

— I have always been lonely. Go spread the news.

O-KATSU-SAN

No, Obaa-San. We shall not spread the news. No one shall know.

O-SODE-SAN

But — we pity you.

OBAA-SAN

I need no pity.— Now my heart is unlocked. The dread Gaki of Kokoru who feeds upon unrest can come to me and feed upon my pain. I care not.

THE TREE

Hai! Hai! Hai!

O-KATSU-SAN

Someone sighs.

OBAA-SAN

Yes. It is my tree. Perhaps there, too, someone in deep distress is imprisoned — as I am imprisoned in this body.— Hai! You do not know. You do not know!

O-SODE-SAN

Obaa-San — we have been hurting. I never knew — I am sorry, Obaa-San.

O-KATSU-SAN

You have been lonely, Obaa-San, but you have always been lonely. I know the having and I know the losing.

O-SODE-SAN

Ay. 'Tis better to long for love than to have it — and then lose. Look at me, whom the villagers call the bitter one. He came to me so long ago.— It was spring, Obaa-San, and

perfume filled the air and birds were singing and his voice was like the voice from the sky-dome — all clear and wonderful. Together we saw the cherry trees bloom — *once:* and on a summer night we saw the wonder of the fire-fly fête. My heart was young and life was beautiful. We watched the summer moon — and when the autumn came — Ai! Ai! Ai! Obaa-San.— I knew a time of love — and oh, the time of hopelessness! And I shut my heart. I did not see, Obaa-San.

OBAA-SAN

You knew his love, O-Sode-San. You touched his hand.

O-KATSU-SAN

But what is that? To her — my little girl — I gave all my dreams. I felt her baby hands in mine and in the night I could reach out to her. I lived for her. And then, one day — Obaa-San, I had known the joy of motherhood and I had known the ecstasy of — child — and now — Her little life with me was only a dream of spring, but still my back is warm with the touch of her babyhood. The little toys still dance before my eyes. Oh, that was long ago. — Now all is black.

OBAA-SAN

All blackness can never fill a mother's heart.— O-Katsu-San, you have known the baby's hand in yours. But I am old — and I have never known, can never know.— I'd go to the lowest hells if once I might but know the touch of my own child's hand.

THE TREE
Hai! Hai! Hai

OBAA-SAN
Just once — for one short day — to fill the empty place in my heart that has always been empty — and a pain —

O-SODE-SAN
Who is that man, Obaa-San?

OBAA-SAN
There? That is a stranger seeking for Kyushu.

O-KATSU-SAN
He seems to wish to speak to you.

OBAA-SAN
A strange man. 'Twas he who seemed to make me unlock my heart to you.

O-SODE-SAN
Then shall we go.— And we'll return, Obaa-San.

OBAA-SAN
Grandmother!

O-KATSU-SAN
We'll laugh no more.
[*They leave. Obaa-San turns to the tree. The Gaki enters, strangely agitated.*

THE GAKI
Obaa-San, for so they called you, tell me — did you say you'd go to the lowest hells if you might know the touch of your own child?

OBAA-SAN
Forever — could I but fill this emptiness in my mother-heart.

THE GAKI
Would you really pay?

OBAA-SAN

Yes, yes. But why do you ask? — Who are you?

THE GAKI

I am a stranger bound for Kyushu.

OBAA-SAN

Why do you, too, make sport of me?

THE GAKI

Go you into your house and come not till I call.

[*Obaa-San obeys under a strange compulsion.*

THE TREE

Hai! Hai! Hai

THE GAKI

You can not feed me now. That cry was the wind amongst your branches. Come. I bid you come to life, to human form.

THE TREE

I do not wish to come.

THE GAKI

I bid you come!

[*When he touches the trunk of the tree, Aoyagi steps forth. She is small. Her little body is swathed in brown and from her arms hang long sleeves like the branches of the weeping willow. At first she shrinks. Then freedom takes hold on her and she opens her arms wide.*

THE GAKI

You are free.

AOYAGI

Free!

THE GAKI

As free as one in life. You are bound to the tree as one might be bound to his body in a dream — but you may wander as one wanders

in a dream — free until the waking — then when the tree suffers, you shall suffer. Though you be leagues away, you shall suffer.— But first you shall dream.— Now you are to be the daughter of Obaa-San.

AOYAGI

Oi!

THE GAKI

Do not call yet.— You are to wed the first young man who passes here and you are to follow him.

AOYAGI

But — Obaa-San?

THE GAKI

She shall feed me with her new-made misery.

AOYAGI

No — no — she loved me so!

THE GAKI

She shall feed me. You will be happy.

[*He disappears.*

AOYAGI

Free! And happy!

[*The Gaki's voice is heard calling Obaa-San. She comes in and looks about. At last her old tired eyes see Aoyagi. For a moment they face each other.*

AOYAGI

Hai.

OBAA-SAN

A dream!

AOYAGI

Mother —

[*Obaa-San stands mute. She listens — yearning for the word again.*

OBAA-SAN

Have you lost your way?

AOYAGI

No, mother —

[*Obaa-San does not know what to think or do. A strange giddiness seizes on her and a great light fills her eyes.*

OBAA-SAN

How beautiful the name! But I am only Obaa-San. Your mother —

[*She shakes her old head sadly.*

AOYAGI

Obaa-San, my mother.

[*Obaa-San lays her hand upon her heart. Then she stretches out her arms.*

OBAA-SAN

Obaa-San — your mother — where is my pain? And you — who are you?

AOYAGI

I am Aoyagi, mother.

OBAA-SAN

You have not lost your way?

AOYAGI

I have but just found my way.

OBAA-SAN

My pain is stilled. There is no emptiness. It is a dream — a dream of spring and butterflies — Aoyagi!

[*She stretches out her arms and silently Aoyagi glides into them — as though they had always been waiting for her.*

OBAA-SAN

I seem never to have known a time when you were not here.

AOYAGI

Oh, mother dear, it is now — and now is always, if we will.

OBAA-SAN

It seems as though the weeping willow tree had warmed and shown its heart to me.

AOYAGI

I am the Lady of the Weeping Willow tree!

OBAA-SAN

I care not who or what you are. You are here — close to my heart and I have waited always. I know I dream — I know.

AOYAGI

How long I've tried to speak to you!

OBAA-SAN

How long my heart has yearned for you!

AOYAGI

Mother!

[*The Gaki appears.*

THE GAKI

Such happiness. Already she has forgotten the coming of the man.

OBAA-SAN

Oh, how I've dreamed of you! When I was very, very young and had my little doll, I dreamed of you. I used to sing a lullaby and still I sing it in my heart:

See, baby, see
The ears of the wolf are long;
Sleep, baby, sleep,
Your father is brave and strong.

I grew into womanhood and still I dreamed of you. And, dreaming still, I grew old. And all the world it seemed to me, made sport of

my longing and my loneliness. The people of the village called me grandmother. The children echoed the grownups' cry and ran from me. Now — Aoyagi — you are here. Oh, the warmth — the peace. Come let me gather flowers for the house. Let me —

AOYAGI

Oh, mother, dear. I am so happy here.

OBAA-SAN (*suddenly becoming the solicitous mother, she handles Aoyagi as one might handle a doll*)

Are you — truly? — Are you warm? — You are hungry!

AOYAGI

No — I am just happy.

[*She nestles close to Obaa-San. There is complete contentment.*

OBAA-SAN

I shall bring you — a surprise.

[*She darts into the house. Immediately The Gaki comes in.*

THE GAKI

You seem very happy, Aoyagi. And your mother is very happy, too.— And I am hungry now.

AOYAGI

You will not hurt her! Let me go back to the Weeping Willow Tree —

THE GAKI

That would kill her — perhaps.

AOYAGI

No — no — I should be near her then — always.

THE GAKI

But where would I have my food? Not in your heart, not in hers — I should starve and I must live.

AOYAGI

What then?

THE GAKI

See!

[*He points to the road. Aoyagi looks in that direction as The Gaki disappears. Riki comes in. Occasionally one may hear a bit of a lullaby sung in the old cracked voice of Obaa-San:*

See, baby, see
The ears of the wolf are long;
Sleep, baby, sleep,
Your father is brave and strong.

Riki is a poet, young, free, romantic. He faces Aoyagi a little moment as though a wonderful dragonfly had poised above his reflection in a pool.

RIKI

You are she!

AOYAGI

My — who — are — you?

RIKI

I am a poet — I have sought everywhere for you.

AOYAGI

I am the Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree!

RIKI

You are my love.

AOYAGI

I am the daughter of Obaa-San.

RIKI
I love you so!
AOYAGI
Yes — I love you so! — But I love Obaa-San, my mother —
RIKI
Come with me.
AOYAGI
But Obaa-San —
RIKI
Come with me.
Butterfly, butterfly, alight upon the Willow Tree
And if you rest not well, then fly home to me.
See! I make a little verse for you.
AOYAGI
But — Obaa-San — is very old and very lonely.
RIKI
She is your mother.— She must be glad to let you go.
AOYAGI
She does not know you.
RIKI
I know you.
AOYAGI
Yes — but I can not leave Obaa-San.
RIKI
We can not stay with Obaa-San.
AOYAGI
Can we not take her with us?
RIKI
No — like the Oshidori — we can go only by two and two along the silent stream — and as Oshidori in silence and in happiness float on and on and seem to cleave the mirrored sky that lies

deep within the dark waters, so we must go, we two, just you and I, to some silent place where only you and I may be — and look and look until we see the thousand years of love in each other's hearts.

AOYAGI

Something speaks to me above the pity for poor Obaa-San.

RIKI

It is love.

AOYAGI

I love Obaa-San.

RIKI

This is love beyond love. This is earth and air — sea and sky.

AOYAGI

I do not even know your name.

RIKI

What does my name matter? I am I — you are you.

AOYAGI

I love Obaa-San, my mother.— I feel happy in her arms; — I felt at peace; — but now I feel that I must go to you.— I am fearful — yet I must go.— You are —

RIKI

I am Riki. But what can Riki mean that already my eyes have not said?

AOYAGI

I feel a strange unrest — that is happiness.

RIKI

Come!

AOYAGI

First let me speak to Obaa-San.

RIKI

Look — out there — a mountain gleaming in the fresh spring air.— Amongst the trees I know a glade that waits for you and me.— A little stream comes plashing by and silver fishes leap from pool to pool — dazzling jewels in the leaf-broken sunlight. Tall bamboo trees planted deep in the father earth reach up to the sky.— And there the hand of some great god can reach down to us and feed our happiness —

AOYAGI

Riki — I must go — I feel the strong hand leading me — I feel the happy pain — I long — I would stay with Obaa-San; but, Riki, I must go.— Yon mountain gleaming in the sun — the bamboo trees — the silver fishes — you —

[*Obaa-San enters carrying an armful of wistaria blossoms. She is radiant. Then — she sees the lovers — and she understands. The blossoms slip from her arms.*

OBAA-SAN

When do you go?

AOYAGI

Obaa-San, my mother — something outside of me calls and I must obey.

OBAA-SAN

I understand.— It must be wonderful, my little daughter.

AOYAGI

Mother! — This is Riki.

OBAA-SAN

Riki! — See that you bring her happiness.

RIKI

I could not fail. I have searched for her always.

OBAA-SAN

We always search for someone — we humans. — Sometimes we find — sometimes we wait always.

AOYAGI

Riki, I must not go. Obaa-San is my mother — and I am all she has.

OBAA-SAN

Yes, Aoyagi, you are all I have and that is why I can let you go. Be happy —

AOYAGI

But you, my mother.

OBAA-SAN

For my sake, be happy. Some day I shall be Obaa-San no more — and what of you then? Go, my little darling, go with Riki.— Some day, you will return.

RIKI

We shall return some day, Obaa-San.

AOYAGI

Farewell.

[*Very simply she steps into Obaa-San's outstretched arms and then, as though they had been forever empty, Obaa-San stands gazing into space with her arms outstretched. Aoyagi and Riki go out.*

OBAA-SAN

Hai! — Hai!

[*She lays her hand upon her heart and, looking into space, turns to the house. There is the*

empty tree — her empty heart! The Gaki comes in.

THE GAKI

Oi! Obaa-San!

[*Obaa-San turns mechanically.*

OBAA-SAN

Did you not find your way?

THE GAKI

I found my way.— But why this unhappiness in your eyes?

OBAA-SAN

I am very lonely. I have lived my lifelong dream of spring and butterflies a single instant — and it is gone.

[*She turns to go.*

THE GAKI

I feed! I feed!

[*The voices of O-Sode and O-Katsu are heard calling Obaa-San.*

Here are your friends again.

[*O-Sode and O-Katsu come in.*

O-SODE-SAN

Hai! Obaa-San, a little lady passed and told us you were lonely.

OBAA-SAN

I am lonely.— But I have always been lonely.

O-SODE-SAN

What has happened?

[*The Gaki, hidden, has been triumphant. Suddenly he seems to shrivel as if drawn with rage.*

OBAA-SAN

I waited, oh so long — you know.— I opened my arms.— My dream came true.— I sang my

lullaby — to my child.— A lover came; — they have gone.

O-KATSU-SAN

She is a-wander in her mind.

OBAA-SAN

I opened my arms here — like this.— She stepped into them as though she had been there always — and now she has gone.— In one short moment I lived my mother-life.

O-SODE-SAN

It was magic! Come, Obaa-San, we'll make some prayers to burn.

O-KATSU-SAN

Some evil ghost.

OBAA-SAN

No! No! Some kindly spirit from the sky-dome came to me.— I have had one moment of happiness complete.— I dreamed and I have known. Now I shall dream again — a greater dream — a greater dream.

[*The old women go into the house.*

THE GAKI

What! I can not feed! My Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree is gone! Obaa-San has built a circle of happiness about her head. Hai! I shall die in this shape.— I must feed. — Perhaps she tries to trick me.— I shall listen.— Why does she not weep? — Why do they not wail?

[*He starts for the house. As he nears it, the voice of Obaa-San is heard crooning the little lullaby:*

See, baby, see
The ears of the wolf are long;

Sleep, baby, sleep,
Your father is brave and strong.

THE GAKI (*defeated, seems beside himself. Suddenly he looks out and sees the mountain-peak*) I'll find them in the bamboo glade. Perhaps I can make unhappiness there. Riki and Aoyagi!

The Curtains Close.

ACT II

A Bamboo Glade on the Mountain-side.
[*The Gaki comes in.*

THE GAKI

This is the glade on the mountain side — the glade where Aoyagi and Riki think to find their happiness. Here must I feed or I shall die in this shape.— Hai! — They come.
[*Riki and Aoyagi enter.*

RIKI

. . . and so like every other prince who is a real prince, he charged to the top of the hill before his men; and they, following him, fell upon the enemy and victory was theirs.

AOYAGI

And then —?

RIKI

And then the Princess laid her hand upon her heart.

AOYAGI

Is that all?

RIKI

Is that all? What more need there be?

AOYAGI

Did they not wed and have great happiness?

RIKI

You can answer that.

AOYAGI

I? I never heard the story before.

RIKI
One may always end a story — just right.
AOYAGI
Not a weeping willow tree?
RIKI
Even a weeping willow tree!
AOYAGI
How?
RIKI
I'll show you.— Stand right here.— So! I stand here.— Now look at me.
AOYAGI
I am looking.
RIKI
Place your hand upon your heart.
AOYAGI
Ay.
RIKI
Now I am the Prince. With sword in hand I come to you. From Kyushu to Koban I've fought my way to you; — through forest, marsh and mountain path I've striven for you. Now I am here.— Look at me.
AOYAGI
Ah!
[*With a cry of delight she rushes to his arms.*
RIKI
And did they wed?
AOYAGI
Ah, love beyond love.
RIKI
And did they have great happiness?
AOYAGI
Ah!

THE LADY OF THE WEEPING WILLOW TREE
ACT III.

[*She nestles close to him.*

RIKI

My little princess! I did not come to you sword in hand; I did not fight my way from Kyushu to Koban. But I strove for you through forest, marsh and mountain pass.— Within me throbbed a mighty song that I could not sing. I saw almost all the world, it seems, and once I heard a voice that seemed to call to me alone. It was at the ferry of Ishiyama. I followed the sound — and there she stood all aglow in the morning sunlight. But when I saw, the song still throbbed within my heart and I could not sing to her.— Someone else called to me —"Hai! Hai! Hai!"

AOYAGI

And what of her — the vision at the ferry of Ishiyama?

RIKI

For all I know she may still be standing there in the morning sunlight all aglow.— I have found you!

AOYAGI

And was she — fair?

RIKI

Ay — how can I say? Now all the world is fair because I see only you in earth and sky and everything.

AOYAGI

She was aglow in the morning sun.

RIKI

How can I say? I heard her voice; — a song was in my heart — a song for you.— I saw her — the song staid locked in my heart for you.

AOYAGI

Riki — Riki —

RIKI

A dream that's true.

AOYAGI

I do not understand it all.— Obaa-San — you — this happiness.— I have known happiness, but not like this.— When I was in the weeping willow tree — sometimes I was happy and sometimes I was hurt.— Oh, Riki, Riki, this glade is like the weeping willow tree! Whenever the soft air sways the leaves, I feel the same sweet joy as when the little breezes played amongst my branches. The rain — oh, the gentle little rain that cooled me in the hot summer — the drops that danced from leaf to leaf and felt like smiles upon my face. Tears! The rain is not like tears, Riki.

RIKI

The dew is tears, perhaps.

AOYAGI

The dew! It came to me like a cool veil that the morning sun would lift and little breezes bear away. Then sometimes — the voice, the loneliness of Obaa-San.

RIKI

Look where her home lies. Far down there beyond that stream, see — there is Kyushu.

AOYAGI

Oh, Riki, my Riki, my august lord, why, why can I stay here in happiness with you when I know that Obaa-San is miserable and alone?

RIKI

I can not say? I only know that we are here —

you and I — and we are happy. Two make a world, Aoyagi. Why? How? I do not know.

AOYAGI

Can we not send a message to Obaa-San?

RIKI

Yes. I shall go down the mountain to the road and tell some passer-by.

AOYAGI

And I?

RIKI

Sit here and rest — and watch the silver stream at Kyushu.

AOYAGI

I shall wait — I shall wait.

RIKI

Sayonara.

AOYAGI

Sayonara.— Sayonara, my august lord.

[*Riki goes out. Aoyagi, left alone, feels the air in the old way. She sways slightly in the breeze, then flutters toward the steps.*

Oh, Kyushu! The silver stream at Kyushu!

[*She evidently sees the place where Obaa-San lives. Her eyes dim a bit and slowly she hums the old lullaby:*

See, baby, see,
The ears of the wolf are long;
Sleep, baby, sleep,
Thy father is brave and strong.

Poor Obaa-San!

[*The Gaki appears.*

THE GAKI

I have lost my way.

[*Aoyagi turns quickly, questioning him almost fearfully with her eyes. There is something of the Aoyagi of the time when The Gaki bade her leave Obaa-San.*

AOYAGI
Whither are you bound?

THE GAKI
I am a stranger bound for Kyushu.

AOYAGI
There is Kyushu. (*She indicates the silver stream*)

THE GAKI
I am told there is a ferry on the way to Kyushu.

AOYAGI
Yes,— at Ishiyama.

THE GAKI
At — Ishiyama.

AOYAGI
Why do you speak so?

THE GAKI
I merely echoed your own words.

AOYAGI
I did not say them so terribly.

THE GAKI
What is in your heart came into your voice, perhaps.

AOYAGI
There is the way to Kyushu.

THE GAKI
Down that path?

AOYAGI
Yes. Did you not meet Riki?

THE GAKI
Riki?

AOYAGI
Yes, my august lord.

THE GAKI
I passed no one — except — a tall woman who was climbing slowly and singing a wonderful song — which I had heard once near the ferry at Ishiyama.

AOYAGI
But Riki just left me here. You must have passed him on the way.

THE GAKI
The by-paths are many and the trysting places are secret — like this.

AOYAGI
Riki would take no by-path. My august lord needs no trysting place save this.

THE GAKI
I do not know. I saw no Riki.

AOYAGI
My lord needs no trysting place. I am here. He knows I am here — waiting.
[*The Gaki looks at her.*

THE GAKI
Riki?

AOYAGI
He knows I am waiting —

THE GAKI
Riki? — Oh, yes the name — I heard it — once — at the ferry at Ishiyama. He has been there.

AOYAGI
Yes.

THE GAKI
A poet?

AOYAGI
Yes.
THE GAKI
He writes wonderful love-songs — they say.
AOYAGI
They?
THE GAKI
Yes,— the people at Ishiyama. I heard one.— It goes — let me see:
"Butterfly, butterfly, alight upon the willow tree —"
AOYAGI
He did not speak that at Ishiyama. He made that for me.
THE GAKI
I heard it, strange to say, at Ishiyama. Perhaps they brought it from — where did you say?
AOYAGI
He made that for me only yesterday.
THE GAKI
And I heard it — yesterday — at Ishiyama. There the wonderful woman was singing. (*She looks at him*) The one I passed just now.
AOYAGI
That is a mistake.— You are wrong.— I know my — Ah! what is it here — that hurts me, tears me, seems to choke me! Riki! — I am all in all to him — he told me that.— He can not make poems for another.
THE GAKI
I should not have told anything.— Forgive me. — I did not know.— To speak truth is deep in

my heart.— I have no gracious subtleties.— I am sorry —

AOYAGI

In the valley there is a mist. I can no longer see the silver stream at Kyushu.— Who are you? — I am afraid! — Riki — Riki —

[*There is no answer.*

THE GAKI

He does not seem to hear.— I shall go to meet him. He went this way, you say?

AOYAGI

Yes.— There is a mist in the valley and I can not see the silver stream at Kyushu —

[*She does not see The Gaki who goes in the direction opposite to the one Aoyagi has indicated.*

Oh, the little day — the little day — of love beyond love.— Riki — my mother, Obaa-San. — Yesterday the mountain-top gleamed like the topmost heaven in the spring sunlight. Today — the valley dies in mist and the mountain-top is lost in the sky.

RIKI (*coming in singing*)

Hai! Hai! Hai!

RIKI

Aoyagi!

AOYAGI

I must go back to Obaa-San, my mother.

RIKI

What has happened, Aoyagi?

AOYAGI

We came up the mountain path side by side, Riki. Without question I gave myself to you.

RIKI
Aoyagi!

AOYAGI
I gave my love — my love beyond love. I believed.

RIKI
Why not believe?

AOYAGI
Your first words were —"You are she!" I did not question. And now —

RIKI
Oh, my little love, was I gone too long?

AOYAGI
My love knows no time, Riki.— You were gone — how can I say? — ages.

RIKI
It was ages, too, to me, Aoyagi.

AOYAGI (*softening*)
I watched the silver stream at Kyushu — and I waited.

RIKI
What, are those tears?

AOYAGI
Nothing, Riki — but I feel so far away — from Obaa-San.

RIKI
She can bridge the distance with her heart. A mother can always bridge all distance with her heart.

AOYAGI
Hai!

RIKI
Our happiness is all she wants.

AOYAGI
Our happiness — (*bitterly*)
RIKI (*He goes to her. She moves away*)
Why —
AOYAGI
The silver fishes —
RIKI
What has happened, Aoyagi?
AOYAGI
Did you send the message to Obaa-San?
RIKI
Yes.
AOYAGI
Did you go down the path?
RIKI
Yes.
AOYAGI
Did you pass a stranger on the way?
RIKI
No.
AOYAGI
A stranger just came by.— He came up the mountain path.
RIKI
I crossed the stream.
AOYAGI (*She takes a deep breath*)
You crossed the stream.
RIKI
Aoyagi — little sweetheart — I cannot understand.—What do you mean?
AOYAGI
Oh, Riki, Riki, I am so alone. Tell me what — why — why —

RIKI
Aoyagi, was I gone too long? Has some demon come to you?

AOYAGI
No demon came. You were gone too long.

RIKI
I went down the path and crossed the stream to take a shorter way. I met a stranger —

AOYAGI
Singing?

RIKI
Yes — I think she was singing.

AOYAGI
She was singing.

RIKI
What do you mean, Aoyagi?

AOYAGI
Who was she?

RIKI
I do not know.— She said she would pass Ishiyama.

AOYAGI
Where did you see her?

RIKI
Beyond the stream — in a little glade.

AOYAGI
Did she sing your song?

RIKI
My song? No.

AOYAGI
Did she know your songs?

RIKI
Aoyagi! What do you want to know?

AOYAGI
Did she know your song to me —
"Butterfly, butterfly, alight upon the willow tree"?

RIKI
Perhaps.— I made that to you years ago — when you were a dream in my heart.

AOYAGI
At Ishiyama?

RIKI
Perhaps.

AOYAGI
Hai! — Obaa-San, my mother! — Oh, my heart — my heart —

RIKI
Aoyagi — what have I done? Let me comfort you!
[*He goes to her.*

AOYAGI
You leave me nothing in all the world.

RIKI
I give you all my world.

AOYAGI
Hai! Hai! Hai!

RIKI
Let me go and call the lady bound for Ishiyama.

AOYAGI
Riki! — ah!

RIKI
Little Aoyagi — my love — she will be tender with you.— And when your tears are gone, she'll bear your message on to Obaa-San.

[*He goes to her, but she draws away. For a moment he is uncertain what to do; — then — he speaks.*

I'll bring her back to you.

AOYAGI

Riki! — No! — We came up the mountain-path together — side by side.— We — but now, Riki, we go two ways.— I to Obaa-San — you to —

RIKI

What do you mean?

AOYAGI

Go sing your songs at Ishiyama! Go make your poems to the butterfly.— I —

RIKI

I have made songs only for you.

AOYAGI

But the songs for me are on every tongue.

RIKI

Ay — I am proud of that.

AOYAGI

The lady at the ferry at Ishiyama —

RIKI

She learned the song to you!

AOYAGI

Ah!

[*Aoyagi rushes upon him and before she realizes what she is doing, she strikes him. He stands petrified a moment, then faces her very calmly.*

RIKI

I shall find the stranger-woman and send her to you.— I can no longer help you.

AOYAGI

You can no longer help.— Oh — life — oh, love — this too short day —

RIKI

I shall stay near at hand until you return to Obaa-San.

AOYAGI

I shall find the path alone.

RIKI

I'll send the stranger-woman to you.

[*Riki goes out.*

AOYAGI

Hai! Hai! Hai! I watched the sunrise only yesterday and I trembled with the wonder of the dew-cooled dawn. Life seemed all peace and — today — I have known a mother's love and my mother.— I have known a lover's touch — love beyond love.— I am waking from a dream. The Gaki said I'd waken — I'd be as free as one in life. Oh, what is this thing they call life? No happiness complete — a vision of a mountain top — a climbing to the goal — a bamboo glade — oh, the mist at Kyushu.— When I go back to Obaa-San — I shall love her so — but oh, the memory of Riki — the mountain gleaming in the sun —

[*She starts sadly from the path. The Gaki enters.*

THE GAKI

Lady, I am here again. It seemed to me that I must return to you. Something seemed to call. (*Aoyagi almost collapses*) I feed! I feed!

AOYAGI
I can not go!
THE GAKI
You seem to suffer.
AOYAGI
Oh — I have lost my way in life —
THE GAKI
Lost your way in life? Let me help you.
AOYAGI
I have stood on the mountain side and I have seen the green valleys far below.
THE GAKI
Talk to me — as you would to yourself.—I hear but I shall not speak what I hear.
AOYAGI
Riki — no, I can not speak even to myself. Deep in me there is a hurt.— I can not tell —
THE GAKI
A woman gives all; — the man forgets.
AOYAGI
But to Riki — he knows — I brought him my full belief — my all-in-all.
THE GAKI
Your perfect faith.
AOYAGI
Ay, my perfect faith.— He spoke to me and then I bowed to my august lord.— I followed him without question.— And he forgets so soon.
THE GAKI
Are you sure he has forgotten?
AOYAGI
You know — you saw the lady from Ishiyama.
THE GAKI
True.— I saw her.

AOYAGI
You did not meet him on the path.
THE GAKI
True.— I did not meet him on the path.
AOYAGI
He crossed the stream.
THE GAKI
Perhaps to shorten the way.
AOYAGI
He met her in a little glade.— Hai!
THE GAKI
What shall you do?
AOYAGI
I'll go my way. I'll return to Obaa-San.
THE GAKI
I'll guide you down the mountain side.— Come, we'll take the shorter way — the by-paths — across the stream — through the little glade —
AOYAGI (*She looks about once more at the scene of her happiness*)
Hai!
THE GAKI
Come!
AOYAGI
No, let us go down the path.— I want to see my footprints — side by side with his.
THE GAKI
Perhaps they're being crushed under the feet of the lady from Ishiyama!
[*Aoyagi starts a moment as though to fly along the path before the lady comes.— She sways slowly — and then falls in a pitiful little heap. — The Gaki takes her in his arms and, utterly triumphant, starts up the mountain-side.*

We'll go up — up — sweet Aoyagi, to the snow peak — gleaming in the sun.— You'll find the mountain-top — not lost in the sky.— Your perfect faith! — Oh, you silly human — oh, futile love — climb, Aoyagi — climb without love.— But first we'll make footprints for the lover's eyes.— Blindness will lead him to the mists at Kyushu.— Jealousy will lead you to the lonely stars.

[*He holds Aoyagi so that her feet touch the ground — toward the downward path. Then with a wild laugh, he turns toward the mountain top. As the laughter dies, the voice of Riki is heard calling*

Aoyagi! Aoyagi! . . . Oi!

The laugh of The Gaki is heard once more very far away — as he ascends the mountain with his burden.

RIKI

Aoyagi! — Aoyagi!

[*Riki comes running in. Presently he sees the footprints.*

Oi! — Aoyagi!

[*He runs down the path.*

Aoyagi! — Aoyagi!

[*Far, very far away The Gaki's laugh is heard.*

RIKI

Aoyagi! — Aoyagi!

[*Night has fallen slowly.*

Aoyagi! — Aoyagi!

The Curtains Close.

ACT III

Before the House of Obaa-San

[*It is moonlight. As the curtain opens, Obaa-San is heard singing the lullaby; from the distance the voice of Riki calls.*

RIKI

Aoyagi! — Aoyagi! — Aoyagi! — Aoyagi!
Oi!
[*Obaa-San appears in the doorway.*
Aoyagi!

OBAA-SAN (*She goes toward the voice*)

Oi!
[*Riki enters.*

RIKI

Obaa-San! Where is Aoyagi?

OBAA-SAN

Where is Aoyagi?

RIKI

Is she not here?

OBAA-SAN

She is not here. Where — Riki!

RIKI

I left her in the bamboo glade — and when I returned she was gone. Her footprints pointed toward the path — and then were lost.

OBAA-SAN

Why did you leave her?

RIKI

I left her because she — I left her.

OBAA-SAN

I do not know, Riki, what has come to pass — but this I know — I am waiting for her.— I am waiting for her. Go seek for her — and bring her back to me.

RIKI

I shall search for her.— Obaa-San, she —

OBAA-SAN

I care not what she did. I am waiting here for her.

[*Riki looks at Obaa-San a moment and then understands.*

RIKI

Aoyagi!

[*He goes out. Obaa-San turns to the empty house — the empty willow tree.*

OBAA-SAN

She will come back to me.

[*She goes into the house. The Gaki enters.*

THE GAKI

Foolish Riki! He searches in the valley. Mad Aoyagi! Alone with the lonely stars! — Oh, wondrous misery that makes itself.

[*He sees Obaa-San. She enters from the house.*

Good-morning, Obaa-San, my friend.

OBAA-SAN

Good-morning, traveller.

THE GAKI

Why do you rise before the dawn?

OBAA-SAN

I could not rest.— Why are you not at Kyushu?

THE GAKI

There is a mist at Kyushu — and I feared to lose my way.

OBAA-SAN

Did you pass a little lady — Aoyagi, by name — alone —

THE GAKI

It seems — I met a little lady.— She was not happy.— That one?

OBAA-SAN

Where?

THE GAKI

I am a stranger here — I cannot say. Over there — or over there.

OBAA-SAN

She will come to me, perhaps.

THE GAKI

Do you know her?

OBAA-SAN

She is my daughter,— Aoyagi.

THE GAKI

Do you not fear for her?

OBAA-SAN

Perhaps.— She will be here soon.— Riki has gone for her.

THE GAKI

She must know the way.

[*The voices of O-Sode and O-Katsu are heard.* This has been a restless night for age. (*He disappears. O-Sode-San and O-Katsu-San enter*)

OBAA-SAN

Good-morning, O-Sode-San. Good-morning, O-Katsu-San.— The lily hands of sleep have passed you by.

O-KATSU-SAN

A strange unrest has seized upon me. I think

— and think of my little one. She is glorious in my heart, and words with wings seem to flash before my eyes like fireflies in the darkness,

O-SODE-SAN

I, too, have lived in words.

O-KATSU-SAN

Obaa-San, is it not wonderful to put a joy or pain in words?

OBAA-SAN

Ah, yes — if there is anyone to hear them. All my long, long years before Aoyagi came to me, my heart sang, and words freighted with my dreams and my love would come to me — here; and they would die because they found no ear attuned to them.— Tell me what you thought, O-Sode-San.

O-SODE-SAN

The moon in calm restlessness
Shows the water grasses of the River of Heaven,
Swaying in the cool spring air —
I know the time to meet my lover
Is not too far away.

OBAA-SAN

Every one has a poem in his heart, I believe.— What was your poem, O-Katsu?

O-KATSU-SAN

Oh, messenger of the other world,
My little one is young;
She can not find her way —
Do you kindly take my little one
Upon your warm, broad back
Along the twilight path.

O-SODE-SAN

And you, Obaa-San, — was it words that kept sleep from your eyes?

OBAA-SAN

Ay, bitter dream-words. And for the bitterness I am paying dearly.— Over and over the words came to me:

Here lies my daughter's sleeping body
On the mat beside me.
But her soul is far away
Asleep in her lover's arms —
And I, her white-haired mother,
Hold only an empty shell.

Oh, I am ashamed — ashamed.— And just now Riki came to me — and told me he could not find Aoyagi.

O-KATSU-SAN AND O-SODE-SAN

Hai!

O-SODE-SAN

Can we not search for her?

OBAA-SAN

I am waiting here.— She may find her way back.— I would not have her come to an empty house.— Come — let's go within — and dream that yours and yours and mine are on their way to us.

[*The old women go into the house. There is just a moment's silence — then:*

AOYAGI

Hai! Hai! Hai!

[*Aoyagi, utterly forlorn, enters. She looks at the house, turns and sees the mountains, covers*

her eyes, and drags herself wearily to the willow tree. She moans as though winter had fallen upon the world and were taunting her. The Gaki enters.

THE GAKI

So you have found your way — in life.

AOYAGI

Oh, let me go back to my tree!

THE GAKI

No, little Aoyagi — you would be happy then.

AOYAGI

Let me die!

THE GAKI

One can not die.

AOYAGI

Hai!

THE GAKI

Where have you been?

AOYAGI

So far — so far! — I am weary.— When I awoke, I was on the mountain-top — alone.

THE GAKI

Were there no stars?

AOYAGI

Oh — the stars, the lonely, lonely stars! I tried to touch them — they seemed so near.— I found the path — the glade — our footprints — strange people — I am here. Let me back! Let me back!

THE GAKI

And what of Riki?

AOYAGI

He does not care.

THE GAKI
And what of Obaa-San?

AOYAGI
What can I give to Obaa-San now — but misery? Am I never to be free?

THE GAKI
What would you do if you were free — climb to the mountain top to see the lonely stars?

AOYAGI
Hai! — Riki! — Obaa-San!
[*Obaa-San enters. The Gaki disappears.*

OBAA-SAN
Was my name spoken in the dawn?

AOYAGI
Mother!
[*With a cry of joy, Obaa-San enfolds Aoyagi in her arms.*

OBAA-SAN
Nadeshiko! My little girl!

AOYAGI
Where is Riki?

OBAA-SAN
He has gone to search for you.

AOYAGI
Was he alone?

OBAA-SAN
Alone?

AOYAGI
Yes. Was there no woman with him — a lady from Ishiyama?

OBAA-SAN
A lady from —

AOYAGI
Yes — tall — fair — singing —

OBAA-SAN
He was alone. A lady from Ishiyama — (*Aoyagi shudders with dread*) brought me a message in the early night —

AOYAGI
It was she — young?

OBAA-SAN
No — old.

AOYAGI
Had she seen Riki?

OBAA-SAN
Yes. On the mountain-side —

AOYAGI
The stranger said she was young and fair.

OBAA-SAN
Perhaps the stranger did not see with honest eyes.

AOYAGI
He would not lie.

OBAA-SAN
Sometimes the eyes and the ears lie.

AOYAGI
Ah!

OBAA-SAN
And if she had been young and fair?

AOYAGI
Riki met her in a glade.

OBAA-SAN
Did you see them meet?

AOYAGI
No — she was singing.

OBAA-SAN
A happy song, perhaps.

AOYAGI
She sang the song he made to me.
OBAA-SAN
How do you know?
AOYAGI
Riki said she knew his song to me.
OBAA-SAN
Ah, that is beautiful, that she should love his song to you.
AOYAGI
He —
OBAA-SAN
My little darling, I do not know what really happened; but this I know, you did not speak fairly to Riki or Riki did not speak fairly to you. Almost every unhappiness comes because we speak too much of our pride and speak too little of our hearts.
AOYAGI
I asked him if he saw her.
OBAA-SAN
Why?
AOYAGI
A stranger told me —
OBAA-SAN
Was it the stranger you believed before Riki could defend himself?
AOYAGI
But, mother, I gave my all in all to Riki. He does not care.
OBAA-SAN
Do you know?
AOYAGI
I asked Riki if they met?

OBAA-SAN
Did he tell you?
AOYAGI
He seemed to be proud to tell.
OBAA-SAN
Then he was unashamed to tell —
AOYAGI
I asked him questions.
OBAA-SAN
But did you ask him the great question in your heart?
AOYAGI
Oh —
OBAA-SAN
Did you say, " Riki, my love, you are in all my heart. Am I in all yours? "
AOYAGI
He told me that.
OBAA-SAN
And did you believe?
AOYAGI
Above all the world!
OBAA-SAN
Then why doubt him later?
AOYAGI
The lady from Ishiyama passed by.
OBAA-SAN
My child, a lady bound for Ishiyama passed by! Had she been singing all the love-songs of all the worlds; had she been fairer than the lotus-flower, why should you have doubted Riki?
AOYAGI
A stranger —

OBAA-SAN

A stranger! — a stranger! — Oh, why — why — why do the eyes of love grow blind because a stranger speaks? You, Aoyagi, did not see the lady bound for Ishiyama. You did not hear her song — and yet upon the ears and eyes of a stranger you would shatter your love.— I saw the lady.— She was singing.— She was not fair.— If she had been — Oh, my little child — Riki is Riki, your august lord, the lord of your life. When he comes back, go to him and speak from your heart.

AOYAGI

What shall I say?

OBAA-SAN

I need not tell your heart.— It is only your head that can not learn to speak unprompted.— Do you love Riki?

AOYAGI

Ay — so dearly!

[*The voice of Riki is heard.*

RIKI

Aoyagi!

AOYAGI

He is coming!

[*Obaa-San, unnoticed, goes into the house. Riki enters.*

RIKI

Aoyagi!

[*When he sees she is safe, he drops suddenly. She goes to him.*

AOYAGI

Riki, my august lord, listen to my heart.—

Forget my anger.— Tell me once again that you love me.— I'll believe.

RIKI

You know — I have always loved you.— When you were a song in my heart, I loved you so! And now —

AOYAGI

Oh, Riki, can we ever forget the blow I struck?

RIKI

That was yesterday — see, this is today: the dawn has spread across the sky. What shall we do? Look back upon the bitterness of yesterday, or try to see the fears of tomorrow, or live in the gladness of today?

AOYAGI

The Gaki of Kokoru is here at the tree. He will not let us live in happiness. He let me go with you because he meant to feed upon the misery of poor Obaa-San.

RIKI

He has not come upon us yet. We are struggling against tomorrow. This is the dawning of today.

AOYAGI

Then shall we live — today.

[*Obaa-San enters from the house.*

OBAA-SAN

Come, Aoyagi; come, Riki. We have found happiness at our door. Within there is rice and tea. Come.

[*They go into the house. The Gaki enters.*

THE GAKI

There is love! — Now what shall I do for misery? Old Obaa-San remembers happiness.

THE LADY OF THE WEEPING WILLOW TREE
ACT III.

She has taught O-Katsu and O-Sode to remember happiness. The lovers are reunited; — now they understand.— And I — I, ah, I must die in this dread shape and stay in this hell through all the eternities unless I bring new misery to them. What can I do? (*He turns to see the tree*) Ah — I shall kill the tree — slowly — slowly — and I'll feed upon them all. Aoyagi is bound to the tree as one is bound to his body in a dream.— I'll kill the tree.

[*He draws his short sword and smites the tree. There is a cry from the house and Aoyagi enters quickly, followed by Riki, Obaa-San, O-Katsu-San, and O-Sode-San. Aoyagi holds her heart.*

RIKI

Aoyagi! (*She droops in his arms. Obaa-San lays her hand upon her dear child's head. O-Katsu-San understands. The Gaki in triumph smiles again. Aoyagi cries out and shudders as she clings to Riki*) Oh, whatever power gave strength to me and led me to my love, give me the chance to save my love.

AOYAGI

The tree! — The tree!

[*The Gaki smites again.*

RIKI

The Gaki of Kokoru! Ay, I know! I know! I fight a fear, Obaa-San. Hold Aoyagi fast — with all your love.— I shall find the Gaki of Kokoru! (*The Gaki smites the tree again and again, and at each stroke Aoyagi fails more and more until she finally crumples in a heap among the three old women*) All strength!

All faith to me! Into my hands give the power to break the bitterest hell asunder! Into my eyes put light that I may see the cowardly fears that infest our way.— Gaki! Gaki! where are you? — I pass about you and in my heart I carry fearlessness and faith.— Upon your wickedness I hurl belief.— Ah, now, I see you.

THE GAKI

Let me go! Let me go!

RIKI

You shall bring misery into no more hearts!

THE GAKI

Ah, pity me! Let me go! I must feed or I shall die!

RIKI

You shall feed no more!

THE GAKI

Do not let me die in this sixth hell! Do not let me die! Once I was human — like you and you. I came into this hell because I was bitter in life.— I made misery for others.— I put mischief in their minds.—

RIKI (*leaping upon him*)

You shall make no more misery.

THE GAKI

Let me feed! Let me live! I can not die thus.

RIKI (*throttling him*)

Dread demon, the end has come!

THE GAKI

Please — please — hear me.

RIKI

Nay, you have made your last horror in our lives.

OBAA-SAN

Riki! Hear him — hear him.— We know not what we do, perhaps.

RIKI

Then speak.

THE GAKI

Let me go! Do you think it did not punish me to see your misery, to bring misery upon you? That is what these hells are. In life we can not always see what wretchedness we make; in the hells we see and know and understand, but we can not escape our evil until we've sucked the bitterness, the horror to the blackest end. Oh — five hells lie between me and human life. In each I may perchance forget the lesson learned before. Let me live! Let me live! — I can not fight your faith! — Let me live!

RIKI

What further harm will you do?

THE GAKI

I cannot help myself. I must live on you.— You are young —

[*He tears himself from Riki and once more rushes to the tree. Aoyagi writhes a moment in agony. Riki leaps upon The Gaki, throttling him once more. The struggle is terrific.*

RIKI

Die!

THE GAKI

Let me go! Let me live! — I promise anything — I —

RIKI

Too late! — You shall harm no more!

[*With one supreme effort, The Gaki draws him-*

self to his full height and seems about to crush Riki. He leaps upon the prostrate Aoyagi and flings her body high above his head. Riki starts for him.

THE GAKI

I shall live! I shall live!

RIKI

Aoyagi!

THE GAKI

Come not near me, Riki, or I shall crush her at your feet. I *shall* live!

[*He laughs the hideous laugh of triumph which rang out on the mountain side yesterday.*

OBAA-SAN

Give her back to us! Feed on me!

THE GAKI

In your heart there is only hope and beautiful memory. Old fool, I can not feed on you.—But now in my arms I hold the precious gift by which I shall pass from hell to hell.

O-KATSU-SAN

Take me!

THE GAKI

Silly old woman, you, too, like Obaa-San, can not feed me. Age learns to grasp at bubbles and pretend that they are stars.

O-KATSU-SAN

But I shall dream of my little girl.

THE GAKI

Ay, dream of her and have tender memories that are not pain.

O-SODE-SAN

I shall think of him and long for him, my lover.

THE GAKI

Ay, and in the memory of the firefly fête you'll make a poem that will leave you all melting-like and holy — then where shall I feed?

RIKI

Obaa-San, are you content? I'll let her die at my own hand before I'll let him live.

[*He draws his dagger and leaps toward The Gaki; but old Obaa-San is too swift for him. She catches his hand.*

OBAA-SAN

Riki! Would you kill the evil by killing the joy of us all?

RIKI

But the joy — my little Aoyagi — can not live so. See —

OBAA-SAN

O Gaki of Kokoru — I stand before you, no longer a suppliant. I am old and in my years I have known all the wanting, all the hopelessness one can know in life. But in your evil way, you brought to me a moment of happiness yesterday and in that moment I saw the beauty that I had always believed must be and yet that I had never known. In your evil arms you hold the treasure of my life — you hold the songs that filled the heart of Riki. But you do not feed, oh, Gaki of Kokoru. You can not feed. Oh, Gaki, what is this sixth hell of yours? — Who made it? Some man who was afraid of the joy of life; — it was too beautiful for his belief. Misery makes itself: so happiness makes itself. You stand before us, holding the darling of our dreams, but there is no misery

so great as yours. See! I stand before you — unafraid — and in my heart lies happiness. — Aoyagi rested in my arms and my breast is warm and there is a glory where her dear head lay. In my life — if you take her from me — there will be an emptiness.— There will be long silences in the days to come; but my breast will still be warm with her touch and my ears will still hear the sweet words you cannot unsay — the lullaby I sang.— Oh, Gaki — it has been sung to her.— The climbing to the mountain gleaming in the sun — the glade where love found the perfect mystery — that cannot be undone whether we live or die.— Love that has been can never be undone.

[*The Gaki looks from one to the other, but finds only that splendid happiness that is almost pain. He loosens his hold upon Aoyagi and turns to Riki with her.*

THE GAKI

She is yours! — I have met perfect faith.— Five hells lie before me — but I have met a perfect faith.— You cannot know what wonder I am knowing. From the sixth hell I have seen a perfect faith.— I am content to die in this shape. Strike, Riki!

RIKI

I have my love.

THE GAKI

But a peace has come upon me, a peace that I have never known.— I seem to be on wings — afloat in the sky.— Stars and suns swing gently by — and cool clouds brush my brow.— Five hells lie before me.— Can it be, in each I shall

find peace like this? — (*He falls on his knees*) Now a fire rages deep in me — a pain — I'm torn.— Oh, Obaa-San, I die — I die.— Come to me — touch me — let me feel your gentle hands.— So! So! — I have never known such gentleness.— Oh, I am cold — cold! Hold me —

[*He rises — sways — and falls. It is full day. The Gaki rises wonderfully.*

Obaa-San — I see — I see.— The hells were made by some man afraid of the joy of life.— It was too beautiful for his belief.— Riki — Aoyagi, there is the mountain gleaming in the morning light.— Go — see your footprints side by side.— A Gaki's feet trod upon them, but left no mark — and they are there side by side. — O-Sode-San, I look across the River of Heaven; — there stands your lover waiting for you — an empty boat is here to bear you to him. — O-Katsu-San,— the messenger of the other world bears your little one upon his broad, warm back.— They are smiling, O-Katsu-San — Obaa-San —

[*He points to Riki and Aoyagi. Obaa-San goes to them and lays her hands upon them.*

OBAA-SAN

My little girl! — my little boy! — Today the sun is very bright.

The Curtains Close.

THE VERY NAKED BOY

An Interlude Before the Curtain

CHARACTERS

SHE
HE
BROTHER

The scene is half way to a proposal.

A hallway with a heavily-curtained doorway in the centre. Right of this are two chairs with a tabouret between them. Right and Left are curtained arches.

She enters quickly, crossing to the chairs.

HE (*following breathlessly and almost colliding with her as she stops*)
Genevieve!

SHE (*with a calmness strangely at variance with her entrance*)
Well?

HE
Why did you —

SHE
I didn't.

HE
I beg your pardon, you may not have known it, but you did.

SHE
I didn't.

HE
If you'll only say you didn't mean it.

SHE
I didn't *do* it.

HE
Now, Genevieve, you know —

SHE
I didn't.

HE
Well, why did you —?

SHE
I didn't do it!

HE (*meltingly but without humor or subtlety*)
Well, if you didn't do it, *dear* —
[*She is adamant.*
Why did you run away the moment I came up to you?

SHE
I didn't run away —
[*He looks at her quizzically.*
I just *came* out here.
HE (*hoping it isn't true*)
But you seemed to be trying to avoid me.
SHE (*with sphinx-like indifference*)
Why should I avoid you?
HE
Genevieve! You make it impossible for me to talk to you. . . . I'll apologise if it will help.
SHE
Why should you apologise?
HE
Perhaps I've misconstrued your meaning.
SHE
I didn't mean *anything* —
[*He smiles pleasantly with more hope than discretion.*
— because I didn't do it.
HE
Now, Genevieve, I saw you do it.
SHE
You'll have to excuse me, Mr. Gordon, from further discussion.
[*She seats herself, fully prepared for all the discussion she can force from him.*
HE
But, Genevieve —
[*He seats himself.*
SHE
I didn't do it — and besides if I *did* what difference does it make? I'm free white and twenty-one.

HE (*with a frail attempt at humor*)
How old did you say?

SHE
I said I was free white.

HE
But, Genevieve, you must admit that —

SHE
Mr. Gordon!

HE
Please call me Henry. (*In his emotion he pronounces it Hennery*)

SHE
I don't see why I should.

HE
You did last night.

SHE
That was different. You were Dr. Jekyll last night.

HE
Oh, Genevieve —

SHE
You're showing your true colors tonight.

HE (*appealingly*)
I'm — sorry —

SHE
You're a tyrant.

HE
I don't mean to be. I think you're wo —

SHE
Now don't be personal. I'm not interested in your thoughts.

HE
But, Genevieve, won't you tell me why you did it?

SHE
I did it because — I've told you often enough I *didn't* do it.
HE (*bitterly*)
Joe —
SHE
Joe — what?
HE
Joe squeezed your hand.
SHE
Well, it's my hand, and besides I don't see why I should be cross-questioned by you.
HE
You know I'm —
[*He leans toward her and she moves away.*
SHE
You're what?
HE
I'm crazy about you.
SHE
Please, Mr. Gordon!
HE
Call me Henry! Just once.
SHE
I don't see why I should.
HE
Please, Genevieve.
SHE
Now don't be silly!
HE
Oh, Genevieve, if you only knew how it hurt me when you did it!
SHE
Did it hurt you?

HE
I could have killed Joe — gladly.
SHE
Honest!
HE
You know — you must know!
SHE
You certainly are calm about it.
HE (*in the most absurd position that hopeless love can twist a man into*)
What can I do? I can't be ridiculous.
SHE
Did you really see us?
HE
Yes, I saw you.
SHE
You seemed terribly tied up with Ethel.
HE
I had to sit by her.
SHE
I don't see why.
HE
I didn't have any place else to go.
SHE
I knew you were looking.
HE
Then why did you do it?
SHE
Don't ask me why. I loathe why.
HE
But oh, Genevieve, I love you so!
[*He grasps her hand, not too violently. She gasps slightly, smiles pleasantly and becomes stern.*

SHE (*encouragingly*)
Please, let go of my hand.
[*He does so. She looks at him in mingled wonder and chagrin.*
HE
Genevieve, isn't there any chance for me?
SHE
I've never thought of such a thing. What do you mean!
HE
I mean I love you.
SHE
. . . Yes?
HE (*taking her scarf in his hand*)
Aren't you interested?
SHE
Why, really, Mr. Gordon, you ask such strange questions.
HE
Oh, Genevieve — Genevieve —
[*He kisses the scarf gently.*
SHE (*looking at him in wonder, disappointment and delight.*
Don't be silly.
HE
When a man's in love he always does silly things.
SHE
Always?
HE
Oh, Genevieve —
[*He reaches for her hand reverently and this time she seems content to let matters rest.*
SHE (*making conversation*)

I have the next dance with —

[*She racks her memory.*

HE

Joe, I suppose.

[*He rises and crosses to the far side of the centre arch.*

SHE (*drawing her scarf about her and brushing against him as she passes.*

Excuse me, please.

HE (*torrentially*)

You shall not go. You *shall* listen to me. You have no right to treat me as a plaything when I love you so! I love you so! I love you so! I think of you all day long, I lie awake at night wondering what stars are looking upon you and I find myself envying them — every one of them.

[*She tries to speak, but he presses her head against his shoulder.*

I won't listen. You must hear me out. I've waited days and days and days for this chance to speak to you, and you've trailed me about like — like — like a poodle. I'm tired of it because I love you so.

[*She tries to speak again; but succeeds only in mussing her hair.*

HE

I want you to marry me, and marry me you shall if I have to carry you away with me. Oh, Genevieve, my darling Genevieve, just know that for this moment I am almost completely happy. You are close to me and I do not feel any struggle against me. Oh, if you will only listen to me, I do not mean to be brutal. I

have torn your dress. I have mussed your precious hair. But I love you so! I love you so!

SHE

Oh, Henry — Henry — You are so wonderful!

[*They embrace one long moment when an arm comes out between the curtains and tugs at his coat.*

He lets go of her as though he had been shot, turns and sees the naked arm and the top of the Boy's head.

BOY (*whispering*)

Get her out of here!

SHE

Oh, Henry, Henry, have I been cruel to you?

HE (*constrained*)

We'd better go.

SHE (*looks questioningly at him*)

Please let's stay here.

[*He presses her head against his breast and looks surreptitiously at the curtains.*

The Boy makes as though to get out.

He starts violently — shoves the Boy back.

SHE

I saw you first — do you remember — at Poughkeepsie.

HE

Yes, yes —

SHE

I think — I liked you then. . . But I never thought you'd be so wonderful.

HE

Let's go (*whispering*). Darling, let's go.

THE VERY NAKED BOY

SHE
No, I want to stay here. I love this nook.
[*He laughs nervously as she crosses to the curtains.*
I should love to fill it full of great tall lilies.
[*By this time she has become lyric and swept her arms against the curtains: with a cry, rushing to him for protection.*
Henry, there's a man behind those curtains!

HE
I think we'd better go.

SHE
Oh, Henry, you're not going to leave him here.

HE
We'd better.

BOY (*poking his head and a naked arm through the curtains.*
Yes, you'd better, because I'm going to get out of here.

SHE
Bob! You get your clothes on!

BOY
I told Mr. Gordon to get my clothes.

SHE
Mr. Gordon —

BOY
Call him Henry — just once — please, Genevieve.

HE (*stiffly*)
I'll get your clothes. Where are they?

BOY
In my room.

HE
What do you want?
BOY
Everything.
SHE (*straightening up*)
Don't be common, Robert.
[*He starts for the door.*
HE
No, I'm not going.
SHE
Hen — Mr. Gordon! . . . Very well. I'll go!
HE
No, you won't go either!
SHE
Please!
BOY
Well, I'll go.
[*Boy moves as though to part the curtains. She screams a stifled little scream and both he and she rush to the curtains to hold them together.*
SHE
Oh, Bob, if you won't get out I'll do anything for you.
BOY
Well, I'm cold.
SHE
Mr. Gordon, please go.
HE
I won't go!
SHE
You are very strange, indeed. . . . I'll go!
[*She nears the door.— Stops.*

SHE
Never mind.

BOY
Oh, Henry, it's Ethel.

HE
Bob, won't you be a good sport? We'll turn our backs.

BOY
But will everybody else turn their back?

HE
Old man, can't you see how it is? We're — we're going to be engaged — and Ethel is out there — and — and — well —

BOY
Joe's out there, too.

HE
Well, yes.

SHE
Bob, I shall tell Father on you.
[*She starts.*

BOY
All right, go ahead. I'll tell Ethel.

SHE
Just wait.

BOY
I'll get out of here!
[*Again the two rush precipitately to hold the Boy in place.*

HE
Bob, be a man! You are childish and common. You are old enough to know better and I think it's an outrage for you to subject your sister to this fright. We can't go out of here just now

— and you're making it very embarrassing for us.

SHE

Mr. Gordon — there's a cape in that closet. Will you get it for Bob. . . He says he's cold.

[*He goes to the closet.*

SHE

Bob, I'll get even with you. You ought to be ashamed. I'm humiliated.

BOY

Why — Sis?

SHE

Imagine my being with a gentleman and having a very naked boy pop into the conversation.

[*He returns with the cape.*

HE

Here's the cape.

[*He tosses it over the Boy's head and suddenly leans over and kisses her.*

BOY

Why don't you smother me!

[*Boy begins to emerge.*

SHE

Bob, be careful.

[*He and She turn away.*

The Boy rises and as he does so the cloak falls about him until, when he steps out of the curtains he discloses trousers and shoes.

BOY

I can't go through the hall looking like this.

SHE

You must.

HE (*turning*)

Go away, Bob. Your sister is very nervous.

[*He sees the boy fairly well clothed. He gasps.*

HE

Why —

SHE

Bob —

[*Turning she sees the boy fairly well clothed.*

I thought — How did you — Why didn't you — What were you doing in there?

BOY

Father was going to get strict and keep me off the water tonight and just as I came down here to get my sweater I heard him coming to the coat room so I jumped behind the curtains and let him pass and then Joe and Ethel came in and I couldn't let them see me this way. And then somebody else came and then you came in — well, I got cold.

HE (*looking out*)

Run on now, Bob, the hall is clear.

[*Boy starts.*

BOY

What was it you did, Sis?

SHE

I didn't do it.

BOY

Why didn't you do it?

SHE

I didn't do anything

BOY

He said Joe squeezed your hand.

SHE

Absurd!

BOY

Well, I hope not, because he and Ethel got engaged in here too!

[*He and She look fondly at each other and He murmurs,* "Genevieve" *as he reaches out for her.*

The Boy begins to sing, "*Oh, Genevieve, Sweet Genevieve,*" *and they become aware of him, turning upon him and pursuing him with a warning cry of* "Bob."

The End

JONATHAN MAKES A WISH

A Play in Three Acts

CHARACTERS

AUNT LETITIA
SUSAN SAMPLE
UNCLE NATHANIEL
UNCLE JOHN
JONATHAN
MLLE. PERRAULT
HANK
ALBERT PEET
MARY
JOHN III

ACT I

JONATHAN MAKES A FRIEND

[*The scene represents the lumber room in the carriage house on John Clay's suburban estate. The room is crowded with old trunks, paintings, barrels, boxes, chests, furniture showing long residence during slow epochs of changing taste. Everything is in good order and carefully labelled. At the right of the room is a door opening onto the stairs which lead to the ground floor. A small window is set high in the peak of the gabled end up centre. At the left a chimney comes through the floor and cuts into the roof as though it had been added by Victorian standards of taste for exterior beautification. An open stove intrudes its pipe into the chimney. The single indication of the life of today having touched the place is the studied arrangement of an old rosewood square grand piano. The keyboard is uncovered. On the top is a tiny theatre — a model masked and touched with mystery, according to early adolescent standards. Two benches stand in front of the piano, and the piano stool is meticulously set in place. A flamboyant placard leaning against the music rack announces:*

TODAY

ZENOBIA

A tragedy in ten acts

by

Alexander Jefferson, Sr.

The light in the room is dim, although it is quite bright out of doors. There are two low windows which are heavily barred. The little theatre is so arranged that when the manipulator stands on the box to work it, his head can be seen over the masking.

. . . . . .

The curtain rises disclosing an empty room. Presently laborious steps are heard on the stairs and a key is turned in the lock. Then Aunt Letitia enters followed by Susan Sample. Aunt Letitia is a motherly old woman who has been in the Clay home for many years. She may have preferences, but like the buildings on the estate, she stays where she is. Susan Sample is a tall, slender girl of fourteen with a very gentle manner and a way of looking at people that indicates a receptivity rarely met in one so old. Letitia goes to one of the trunks marked E R in large white letters and unlocks it.

LETITIA

Here they are, my dear. Help me with the hasps.

SUSAN

What does E. R. really stand for, Mis' Letitia?

LETITIA

E. R. . . . That's a secret, Susan, that little girls aren't supposed to know.

SUSAN
I won't tell.
LETITIA
But what good would that do, my sweet? Please open the windows.
SUSAN (*opening the window and returning to her question*)
No one would know you told me.
LETITIA
I would know. Yes, I would know that I had told somebody else's secret.
SUSAN
Whose secret is it? Please.
LETITIA
I've been living in this house for thirty-five years, Susan, and I've known the secrets of all the boys and girls from time to time.
SUSAN
You know mine, too.
LETITIA
And I've never told one of them, either.
SUSAN
Does old Mr. John ever have secrets?
LETITIA
Old Mr. John! For shame! . . . Of course he has secrets.
SUSAN
I wish I knew some of his, Mis' Letitia.
LETITIA
My dear, you never will know them. John is very quiet.
SUSAN
Who in the family didn't have any secrets at all?

LETITIA

Oh, they all had secrets when they were young. Nathaniel had *fewer* than any of them and . . . [*Her words are lost tenderly in a memory.*

SUSAN

Why hasn't he ever come back home?

LETITIA (*as she busies herself with the contents of the trunk*)

That is his secret, Susan, and we mustn't ask too many questions. Nathaniel is coming today. I won't ask any questions. . . . He was a fine young man. Yes, he's coming back today, my dear. He was the baby of the family.

SUSAN

How old is he now?

LETITIA

You little chatterbox! Between you and Jonathan I have to fight to keep anybody's secrets.

SUSAN

Does Jonathan ask many questions?

LETITIA

When we're alone he does. He's just like his Uncle Nathaniel. God bless him!

SUSAN (*seeing a costume in the trunk*)

Oh, isn't that just wonderful!

LETITIA (*holding the costume up for Susan to see*)

That is what you can wear in the pageant, my dear Susan.

SUSAN (*taking the costume*)

Oh! Oh! Oh! . . . I wish I knew whose it was.

LETITIA

Would that make it any prettier?

SUSAN

No, but I'd like to know just the same. . . . Was it E. R.'s?

[*A cry is heard outside,* "Aunt Letty! Aunt Letty!"

LETITIA

Oh, Susan, it's Nathaniel! It's my boy. Here I am, dear.

[*She has an armful of costumes which she drops nervously.*

SUSAN

Mis' Letitia, I believe you love him best of all!

LETITIA

No, I don't, but I always understood him, I think.

[*The voice below calls again,* "Where are you?"

Come up here, my boy. Come up to the lumber room.

[*Steps are heard on the stairs, young eager steps, and Nathaniel Clay bursts into the room. He is an eternally young man of thirty-five, who has touched the dregs and the heights of the world and remained himself.*

NATHANIEL (*taking Letitia in his arms, then holding her from him as he inspects her.*

Aunt Letty! Not a day older. . . . But oh, so wise.

LETITIA

Nathaniel, my boy, my darling, darling boy.

NATHANIEL

Now, now. Don't cry.

LETITIA

My boy, my boy. My splendid boy.

[*Susan has forgotten her costume in her admiration for Nathaniel. She puts it down on the bench in front of the piano.*

NATHANIEL

And this is —

LETITIA

This is Susan Sample.

NATHANIEL

Not —

LETITIA

Yes, time has been flying, Nathaniel. This young lady is Mary Sample's daughter.

NATHANIEL

How do you do? I can't believe it. You were only a little pink cherub up there in the sky when I ran —

LETITIA (*hurriedly interrupting him*)

Yes, Susan was born three years after you went away.

NATHANIEL

Oh! . . . And, Aunt Letitia, you've opened Emily's trunk!

LETITIA

Yes, Susan is going to be in a pageant.

SUSAN

Who was Emily?

NATHANIEL

She was —

LETITIA

Nathaniel dear, you must not satisfy her curiosity.

(*To Susan*)

You go find Jonathan, dear, and tell him that his uncle is here.

(*To Nathaniel*)
I'll put these things away, and we'll go into the house.

SUSAN (*reluctantly*)
Good-bye, Mr. Clay.

NATHANIEL
Good-bye, Susan. You'll come back, won't you?

SUSAN
Oh, yes. Good-bye.

NATHANIEL
Good-bye.
[*Susan goes out.*

LETITIA
She hates to go. She's never seen anyone just like you: and I have only seen one.

NATHANIEL
Who's Jonathan?

LETITIA
He's the one. . . He's Emily's boy.

NATHANIEL
You mean Emily —

LETITIA
No, no, my dear. Emily was married, left the stage. She wasn't happy. The boy was her only comfort.

NATHANIEL
He's my nephew. Why, I'm Uncle Nathaniel. Oh, Aunt Letty, I'm getting to be an old man!

LETITIA
Nathaniel, Jonathan doesn't know about his mother. I sent Susan away because I didn't want her to associate these things with Jonathan's mother.

NATHANIEL
My God, Emily didn't do anything wrong.
LETITIA
Well, she was an actress.
NATHANIEL
And a good one, too.
LETITIA
Yes, yes, dear. All that has been talked over many times, but John is the head of the family and he doesn't approve of the stage.
NATHANIEL
So! John is still himself.
LETITIA
John is austere, Nathaniel. He is a Clay through and through and he holds to the traditions of the family.
NATHANIEL
I remember the traditions, Aunt Letitia.
LETITIA
I never oppose John. He feels that he is right. But it *is* very hard sometimes to live up to his rules.
NATHANIEL
Has he rules?
LETITIA
Well, he has ideas, dear — much like your father's. We might call them rules.
NATHANIEL
Where is Emily?
LETITIA
Two years ago, Nathaniel.
[*There is a moment's silence.*
NATHANIEL
Did she ever go back to the stage?

No. John forbade it.

NATHANIEL

And John is still forbidding.

LETITIA

John is the head of the family.

NATHANIEL

So. . . The Clay family is still an absolute monarchy.

LETITIA

Nathaniel, dear, will you promise me —

NATHANIEL (*with a smile*)

I'll try.

LETITIA

Will you promise not to antagonize John?

NATHANIEL

Will John antagonize *me?* I came back to see my home — to see you, my dear aunt. But I am a grown man now.

LETITIA

Won't you try to be patient? It will be pleasanter for me. And I have waited so long to see you, Nathaniel. There are seventeen very, very long years for us to talk about. Let John have his way.

NATHANIEL

Well, I'll try for a few days. But I give you warning, my ideas have been settling during the past few years, too.

LETITIA

Remember, he is used to being obeyed just as your father was.

NATHANIEL

Yes, I remember that, dear Aunt; but John isn't

my father. He is just a brother to whom fate gave a fifteen years' start by birth.

[*As a voice calls,* "Nathaniel, are you up there?" *Nathaniel looks at Letitia.*

NATHANIEL

His voice is just the same. (*Calling*) Yes, John, I am up here.

[*The antagonism between the two brothers is apparent immediately.*

John Clay enters. He is an austere, pompous man of fifty who has the softness of the tithe-collector and the hardness of the tax-collector. He speaks with an adamantine finality which is destined to rude shattering.

JOHN

How do you do, Nathaniel?

NATHANIEL

I am very well, I thank you, John. How are you?

[*They shake hands perfunctorily.*

JOHN

You arrived ahead of time.

NATHANIEL

Yes.

JOHN

We haven't met for seventeen years.

NATHANIEL

No. I've been away, John.

JOHN

Where have you been?

NATHANIEL

I shall be here for two weeks, John, and if I should tell you all about myself today, I should have nothing to talk about tomorrow.

JOHN (*severely*)
You haven't changed, Nathaniel. You are still frivolous.
NATHANIEL
I shall be serious when I am your age, brother.
JOHN
I came out here to ask you to be very careful of your conversation before the children.
NATHANIEL
The children?
JOHN
Yes, my two grandchildren.—
NATHANIEL
Grandchildren! My, that makes me a great uncle. I *am* getting old, Aunt Letitia!
JOHN
I do not care to have them or Jonathan hear about any revolutionary or other unusual ideas.
NATHANIEL
I shall try not to contaminate the children and Jonathan. How old are the children?
JOHN
Mary is four and John 3rd is two.
NATHANIEL
I shall try to spare their sensibilities.
JOHN
They may not understand you but they will hear.
NATHANIEL (*to Letitia*)
How old is Jonathan?
LETITIA
Fourteen.
NATHANIEL
The impressionable age.

JOHN

The silly age.

NATHANIEL

Brother John, no age is the silly age. Fourteen is the age of visions and enchantments and fears. What a boy of fourteen sees and hears takes on a value that we cannot underestimate. Most men are defeated in life between fourteen and twenty. At fourteen a boy begins to make a lens through which he sees life. He thinks about everything. Ambition is beginning to stir in him and he begins to know why he likes things, why he wants to do certain things. He formulates lasting plans for the future and he takes in impressions that are indelible. Things that seem nothing to old people become memories to him that affect his whole life. The memory of a smile may encourage him to surmount all obstacles and the memory of a bitterness may act as an eternal barrier.

JOHN

Nathaniel, are you a father?

NATHANIEL

No, John, I am only a bachelor who is very much in love with life in general and one lady in particular.

JOHN

You can know nothing of children, then.

NATHANIEL

I remember myself. Most men forget their younger selves and that is fatal.

JOHN

One would think to hear you talk that the most

important things in life were a boy of fourteen and his moorings.

NATHANIEL

One might know it.

JOHN

You are still the same impractical theorist.

NATHANIEL

I am the same theorist — a little older, a little more travelled. The trouble with you, John, is that you think no age is important except your own. You always thought that, even when you were fourteen. Oh, I know I wasn't born then, but I know you.

JOHN

Did you come back to your home in order to lecture me?

NATHANIEL

No, no. I beg your pardon. I came back to see my home and Aunt Letitia and the children — and you, and I — I think — Jonathan.

JOHN

Nathaniel, when your letter came telling me that you had decided to come back to see us, I was going to ask you not to come —

NATHANIEL

I gave no address.

JOHN

But on second thought, I made up my mind to forgive you —

NATHANIEL

Thank you.

JOHN

To let bygones be bygones.

NATHANIEL
That is the better way, brother: let the dead past bury its dead.

JOHN
Why did you run away from home?

NATHANIEL
Because we couldn't agree, John.

JOHN
I was older than you; my judgment was mature; I was the head of the family, in my father's place

NATHANIEL
We didn't speak the same language. I wanted something out of life that you couldn't understand; that my father couldn't understand. I determined to get it by myself.

JOHN
Well?

NATHANIEL
And so, I ran away.

JOHN
Leaving no trace, no word.

NATHANIEL
Oh, yes, I left a very important word —" Goodbye."

JOHN
You were willing to leave all the work of our father's business on my shoulders.

NATHANIEL
You were willing to take it all. And I wanted my freedom.

JOHN
You were selfish and heartless.

NATHANIEL

Selfish? Because I had my life to live and meant to live it?

JOHN

You should have told us where you were living.

NATHANIEL

I preferred to work out my salvation alone, without interference. My going away gave you a free hand. John, don't tell me that you were not overjoyed that my flight gave you all my father's fortune.

JOHN

It was my duty as head of the family to protect you.

NATHANIEL

I didn't ask for protection. I wanted understanding.

JOHN

A boy of eighteen must not be allowed freedom.

NATHANIEL

Perhaps not, John, but he must be allowed to grow toward his goal. Eighteen is not too young for a man to fly through the air in defense of his country, or you. The burden of the world today is on the shoulders of men from eighteen to eighty, share and share alike. . . . I wanted to be a writer —

JOHN

And our brother Henry wanted to be a musical composer and our sister Emily wanted to be an actress! A fine putout for the leading commercial family of this state!

NATHANIEL

Well, John, our brother and our sister have

paid the final penalty. They have died. Henry left a handful of worthless little tunes and Emily left a trunkful of costumes as monuments to their folly. And now Emily's boy is here under your wing.

JOHN

He's a dreamer like all the rest of you.

NATHANIEL (*with interest; tenderly*)

Yes?

JOHN

He spends all his leisure time playing with that fool toy there.

[*He points to the model theatre. Nathaniel smiles and crosses to the piano and lifts the cloth that covers the theatre; then he looks at the placard and laughs joyously.*

NATHANIEL

"Zenobia." "Alexander Jefferson, Sr."

JOHN

He pretends that's his name — Alexander Jefferson, Sr!

NATHANIEL

People like to have other names. Look at all artists — like writers, pugilists, and actors, and base ball players. And the Sr. is an effort to appear older.

JOHN

Well, I'm breaking him of all that nonsense. I allow him only a certain number of hours for play. Emily used to spoil him and it's been a task to conquer him.

NATHANIEL

Jonathan is fourteen. When I was fourteen — What are Jonathan's tastes?

JOHN

He reads all the time and he wants to write plays and poetry; but I am conquering that silliness.

NATHANIEL

I think I am going to like my nephew. John, I'll come into the house shortly. I think I'll look at this toy a moment and I'll get Aunt Letitia to show me some of Emily's things. A mere matter of sentiment.

JOHN

Now don't put any foolishness into the boy's head.

NATHANIEL

I promise you I sha'n't try to change the boy's head, brother.

JOHN

I play golf from five to six.

NATHANIEL

Oh, you've taken up athletics?

JOHN

The doctor's advice. Will you join me?

NATHANIEL

Thank you, no.

JOHN

Very well. I'll see you at dinner.

NATHANIEL

Thank you. (*John goes out. Nathaniel looks musingly at Letitia who has been sitting silently on Emily's trunk, knitting. Nathaniel crosses to her and sits on a stool at her feet*) Does John always talk to you so much, little church mouse?

LETITIA

I have been a poor relation for thirty-five years, my boy, and to be a successful poor relation, one must learn the art of silence.

NATHANIEL

No wonder I ran away!

LETITIA

But you should have written to me.

NATHANIEL

Perhaps — I should — yes — I should have written, but I didn't. You see, Aunt Letty, I was a sensitive boy. All my life I had dreamed of doing my own work. I saw Henry disappointed in life, I saw Emily made miserable enough through the traditions of the family. John couldn't understand me and I couldn't understand him. There was no common meeting-ground. John was the head of the family and so deeply was the idea of submission to rule ingrained in me that I could think of only one way out of my restraint. I wouldn't study engineering, and I wouldn't continue at Somerset School. Well, I ran away from my ancestral castle to find my way in a new world. I think I have found it.

LETITIA

Jonathan doesn't want to study engineering, either.

NATHANIEL (*Looks closely at her a moment and then smiles*)

As Ibsen would say — Ghosts! (*He walks toward the window*) Poor John!

LETITIA

Poor Jonathan!

[At this moment Jonathan enters the room. He is a slender boy of fourteen with a deep problem in his eyes. When he smiles before his elders, which is seldom, he seems always prepared to restrain the smile. His voice is just changing and this adds to his reticence. He has a tremendous capacity for expressing wonderment and, as usual with one of his type, he is capable of great displays of temper. He gives the impression of thinking about everything he sees. He is at the age of wonder and only custom prevents the world from becoming the promised land of visions and enchantments.

NATHANIEL

Poor Jonathan!

[He turns and sees the boy.

The two stand face to face for a moment. For Nathaniel it is the first moment of a new relationship. For Jonathan it is a moment of uncertainty. He has heard himself called "Poor Jonathan" and he is facing another male relative.

Jonathan looks first at Letitia, then at Nathaniel and then at Letitia.

LETITIA

Jonathan, this is your Uncle Nathaniel. Nathaniel, this is Emily's boy.

NATHANIEL (*Holds out his hand which Jonathan takes very shyly*)

Jonathan!

JONATHAN

How do you do, sir?

NATHANIEL

How tall you are!

JONATHAN (*quite conscious of his short trousers*)
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
I didn't take you away from any studies, did I?
JONATHAN
No, sir. . . I was just writing something when Susan called me.
NATHANIEL
May I ask what you were writing?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir. . . .
[*He swallows.*
. . . A play.
NATHANIEL
A play! *Zenobia?*
JONATHAN (*Looks quickly for some indication of laughter in Nathaniel's eyes*)
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
It's a tragedy, isn't it?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
In ten acts.
JONATHAN
There may be only eight.
NATHANIEL
Then I know who you are! (*Jonathan looks at him in surprise*) You are the celebrated dramatist, Alexander Jefferson, Sr.
JONATHAN
Did Aunt Letitia tell you?
NATHANIEL
No, sir. I read it on the billboards. (*Jona-*

than laughs with a catch in his breath) And I should like to attend a performance, Mr. Jefferson.

JONATHAN

It isn't finished yet.

NATHANIEL

Well, when am I to see this theatre?

LETITIA

Your Uncle Nathaniel and I shall come together.

JONATHAN

You've seen all the plays.

LETITIA

That doesn't make any difference. I'd like to see them again.

[*Jonathan looks at her to be sure she is in earnest. Then he smiles.*

JONATHAN

I'll finish *Zenobia* for tomorrow.

NATHANIEL

Agreed! Can you get the scenery ready?

JONATHAN

I painted it last week.

LETITIA

You must have the orchestra, too, Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Yes, ma'am. Susan has some new pieces.

NATHANIEL

Is Susan the orchestra?

JONATHAN

Yes, sir.

NATHANIEL

What else have you written?

JONATHAN
A lot of plays, sir. Mother and I used to write little plays. I don't write many any more.
NATHANIEL
Why not?
JONATHAN
I'm getting too big.
NATHANIEL
Do you ever write anything beside plays?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
That's splendid. Stories?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir. . . . And I've written some po— poetry.
NATHANIEL
Excellent!
JONATHAN
They're not very good, but Susan always wants me to write the poetry for the music.
[*Aunt Letitia has repacked the trunk and locked it. She sees that Nathaniel and Jonathan are getting on famously.*
LETITIA
I'll go to the house now and you can talk to Jonathan, Nathaniel.
[*Jonathan looks appealingly at Letitia, but with a smile she goes downstairs.*
Jonathan and Nathaniel look at each other for an embarrassed minute, then Jonathan takes refuge at his theatre.
NATHANIEL
May I see some of your plays?

JONATHAN
Do you really want to see them?
NATHANIEL
Yes.
[*Jonathan goes to a box on the piano in which there are many manuscripts carefully bound. He hands one to Nathaniel.*
JONATHAN
Here is one that mother and I wrote. She loved the theatre.
NATHANIEL (*taking the strange-looking little manuscript. Reading:*)
" Robin Hood and His Merry Men."
JONATHAN
We used to make all those old stories into plays.
NATHANIEL
Do you like to write?
JONATHAN
Oh, yes. I wish I could write real plays, but there's no one to help me now. My mother used to correct them and tell me what was wrong. She knew a lot about the theatre and she used to tell me all sorts of things. But now Aunt Letitia doesn't say anything. Sometimes she comes to a show, but she can't help me. And Uncle John doesn't like the theatre. He thinks I'm too old to give shows, but I can't help it. There's nothing I like so much.
NATHANIEL
May I read this some time?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir. . . Would you like to see it played?
NATHANIEL
I want to see them all.

JONATHAN
Forty-one of them?

NATHANIEL
Forty-one of them! Where do you keep them all?

JONATHAN
Here in this box.
[*He shows all the manuscripts.*

NATHANIEL
What are the pink ones?

JONATHAN
Those are the ones mother liked best and these — (*showing blue ones*) are the ones I liked best. . . . I like them all now, but it used to be lots of fun to choose our favorites.

NATHANIEL
What is this one that's different from all the rest?

JONATHAN
That's one that mother wrote all by herself. It's best of all.

NATHANIEL
You must save these carefully, Jonathan — all your life.

JONATHAN
Oh, yes, sir.

NATHANIEL
Some day you may be proud of them.

JONATHAN
See — she wrote this, and I wrote this. I was a bad writer, wasn't I?

NATHANIEL
What do you want to do, Jonathan?

JONATHAN
You mean what do I want to be?
NATHANIEL
Yes.
JONATHAN
I want to write plays.
NATHANIEL
Is that all?
JONATHAN
Well, I'd like to run a theatre.
NATHANIEL
What else?
JONATHAN
I'd — you won't tell anyone, will you?
NATHANIEL
Of course not.
JONATHAN
You see, Uncle John wants me to go to Somerset School to study engineering and learn the business.
NATHANIEL
And you don't want to — Is that it?
JONATHAN
I'd rather be a writer.
NATHANIEL
They say you can't make any money at writing.
JONATHAN
That's what Uncle John says, but I want to just the same.
NATHANIEL
If you follow John's advice, you'll be a rich man.

JONATHAN
I'd rather be poor. What would you do, Uncle Nathaniel?

NATHANIEL
I — why I'd — Oh, come now, Jonathan — you know John is the head of the Clay family and you and he must decide this question.

JONATHAN
Wouldn't you want to be what you want to be?

NATHANIEL
Perhaps I should.

JONATHAN
I don't see how anyone can decide what you want to be — no matter how old he is.

NATHANIEL
Have you ever talked to John?

JONATHAN
Oh, yes, sir.

NATHANIEL
What did he say?

JONATHAN
He said I had to study engineering or go to work in the factory next fall for good.

NATHANIEL
What do you want to do?

JONATHAN
I want to go to a fine prep school and then to college and then —

NATHANIEL
Then what?

JONATHAN
I want to be an actor!!

NATHANIEL
I see.

JONATHAN
Don't tell anybody.
NATHANIEL
I won't. That's pretty far from engineering, isn't it?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir. But everybody can't be alike. You and Uncle John aren't anything alike.
NATHANIEL
And we're brothers, too.
JONATHAN
Do you ever get all mixed up and don't know what to do?
NATHANIEL
Oh, yes. I think everybody does.
JONATHAN
What do you do then?
NATHANIEL
I do something very silly.
JONATHAN
Do you do silly things, too?
NATHANIEL
Yes. I'm afraid I do.
JONATHAN
What do you do when you get all mixed up?
NATHANIEL
I'll tell you — it might not work with everybody, you know — but it works with me.
JONATHAN
Yes, sir!
NATHANIEL
My mother used to sing me a song called — "There is a green hill far away." I always liked that song because it gave me a feeling of

contentment and happiness. I imagined that I could see that hill with its pleasant green slopes and at its foot lay a little cottage all cool and pleasant and open to the winds. There were no locks and bolts to keep one out or to keep one in. I used to imagine that I was climbing that hill to the top of the world and when I reached the summit I could see —

JONATHAN (*enthralled*)

I know — the whole wide world.

NATHANIEL

Its very bigness made me happy in my imagination. . . . Then when I grew up and heavy troubles came to me I remembered the Green Hill Far Away and one day I found such a hill and I climbed it — clear to the top — and there below me lay the world — the whole wide world — and I told the world something then and felt the better for it. . . . Jonathan, there is nothing like a hill-top to make a man feel worth while.

JONATHAN

I know what you mean. . . . But I always want to jump when I look down from any place, do you?

NATHANIEL

I suppose everybody does.

JONATHAN

Uncle John thinks every boy ought to be alike.

NATHANIEL

Many schools used to think that way.

JONATHAN

But boys don't all think the same. They're dif-

ferent just like men, only they don't know so much.

NATHANIEL

Perhaps not.

JONATHAN

Uncle John won't let me put on long pants until I'm fifteen.

NATHANIEL

He let me put them on when I was fifteen, too.

JONATHAN

Were you as tall as I am?

NATHANIEL

Just about the same height, but my legs were like pipe stems and I was very much ashamed.

JONATHAN

So am I.

NATHANIEL

You'll forget all about it after you're fifteen.

JONATHAN

I can talk to you like I used to talk to my mother.

NATHANIEL

Thank you. We're going to be fine friends, aren't we?

JONATHAN

You bet. Is it silly for me to like to write plays?

NATHANIEL

Why do you ask that?

JONATHAN

Because Uncle John says it's silly.

NATHANIEL

Well, it all depends upon the way you look at it,

Jonathan. The world has never been able to agree as to what is and what is not silly. Mr. Browning, the poet, might have considered hooks and eyes the silliest things in the world; but to Mr. de Long, they were, no doubt, the most important things in the world. Many men agree with Mr. Browning and many ladies agree with Mr. de Long.

JONATHAN

That's what I think.

NATHANIEL

You and I probably have many thoughts in common.

[*Susan and Mlle. Perrault enter. Mlle. Perrault is a Frenchwoman of exquisite grace and poise. She speaks English fluently, but with a charming accent and an occasional Gallic phrase larding her pleasant sentences. Her entrance into the room is electric. She has already won Susan.*

MLLE. PERRAULT

Ah, there you are, Mr. Nathaniel Clay. I met la belle Susanne in the roadway and she told me you were in the lumber room in the carriage house and I say to her, "We shall track him to his lair." Besides, I want to see what a lumber room is.

NATHANIEL

I was hiding from you.

MLLE. PERRAULT

Villain! And this is Jonathan. How do you do? Susanne tells me you write poetry and she writes music and she promise me that you will sing for me.

JONATHAN
I can't sing.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Ah! Susanne tell me you have a theatre and you write plays and paint scenery and write poetry and sing songs and she say if I come here to the lumber room in the carriage house you will play me a tragedy and sing me a song.
JONATHAN
Yes, ma'am.
NATHANIEL
Having introduced yourself to everybody, will you tell me, Susan, how Mlle. Perrault learned so much in such a little time?
SUSAN
Well, I was waiting for Jonathan to call me.
JONATHAN
Oh, I forgot.
MLLE. PERRAULT
She was sitting like a little fairy in the grass by the roadway, and I stop my car and ask for Mr. Nathaniel Clay and she say you are here in the lumber room in the carriage house and she tell me many things — because we like each other very, very much and we walk very, very slowly.
NATHANIEL
Now! Now that you know all about Miss Susan Sample and Mr. Jonathan — (*He realizes he doesn't know Jonathan's second name*) I think I shall introduce you by your pen name, Jonathan — Mr. Alexander Jefferson, Sr. (*To Mlle. Perrault*) I am going to let them know about you. This,

lady and gentleman, is Mlle. Marthe Perrault of Paris, France. Mlle. Perrault, may I present my friend Susan and my nephew Jonathan?

MLLE. PERRAULT (*falling into the mood*)

I am very, very pleased to see you again, Miss Sample. It is a great pleasure to have the honor of meeting you, Mr. Alexander Jefferson, Sr. I am looking forward to the première of your great tragedy, *Zenobia,* of which Miss Sample has been telling me.

SUSAN (*Puts her arms about Mlle. Perrault and Jonathan is uncertain whether to be happy or afraid*)

He wrote lots of others, too.

JONATHAN

Forty-one.

NATHANIEL

I think I'll tell you two a secret. (*Susan pricks up her ears*) Do you like secrets?

SUSAN

Yes, sir.

NATHANIEL

And can you keep them?

SUSAN

Oh, yes, sir.

NATHANIEL

Well, some day Mlle. Perrault is going to be my wife.

[*He kisses Mlle. Perrault's hand.*

Mlle. Perrault shows her engagement ring.

SUSAN

When?

NATHANIEL

Very soon. She is here on some war work and

when she and her father go back to France I shall follow and we shall be married.

SUSAN

Ooh —

NATHANIEL

Now you mustn't tell.

SUSAN

Honest.

JONATHAN

No, sir!

MLLE. PERRAULT

Now, we have a secret. And you are going to sing me a little song.

SUSAN

Come on, Jonathan. Let's do the new one.

JONATHAN

Well, I'll try.

[*He is quite miserable with stage-fright. Susan sits at the piano and plays a chord. Then Jonathan begins to sing with much fear in his voice.*

JONATHAN (*singing*)

All on a summer's day,
With flowers by the way,
A fair young prince and his purple knight
Found a princess at her play.
So by the crescent moon
He asked a royal boon
And sat him down on a soft green knoll —
And the night-time came too soon.

MLLE. PERRAULT

Oh, that is just like a little French peasant song! How does it go?
La — la — la — la — la — la.

[*Susan begins to play it again.*
Jonathan sings more surely than before.
Slowly Mlle. Perrault falls into the rhythm and very simply dances a little peasant dance to Jonathan's and Susan's song. The two youngsters are in the seventh heaven of delight.
So — when one is very happy or very sad, he makes a song and when he's very, very happy, he dances. And when he is very, very, very unhappy he dies. You see, *I* am very, very happy. When do you play *Zenobia,* Mr. Jefferson, Sr.?

JONATHAN
I'll have it ready tomorrow, maybe tonight.

NATHANIEL
We shall have a season ticket. But now, I want you to meet my blessed Aunt Letitia. She hasn't changed one bit in all these years.

MLLE. PERRAULT
To Aunt Letitia then. Good-bye, Jonathan. Tomorrow is the day of the great première.

JONATHAN (*awkwardly*)
Thanks.

MLLE. PERRAULT
And la belle petite Susanne, au revoir.

SUSAN
I'll walk with you part of the way.

MLLE. PERRAULT
Very well. Marchons, marchons. . . .
[*They go out.*

NATHANIEL (*holding back a little*)
Good-bye, Mr. Manager.
[*He goes out calling* "Marthe."
Jonathan is left alone in his joy. As he stands,

a strange, aimless, vacuous whistling is heard outside the window as though from one ambling by. Jonathan hears it unconsciously, moves to put his plays away, alternately whistling and singing "All on a summer's day." Presently the whistling of the strange air is heard as though coming from downstairs. It stops and a voice calls out "Hi!"

JONATHAN

Who is it?

VOICE

It's me.

JONATHAN

What do you want?

[*By this time the Voice has become a person in the shape of Hank, one of the scum of creation who asks nothing of life and gives nothing. He was born of woman and he grew into man's form, but one looking at him wonders how he survived dirt and the mere effort of breathing. He is stoutish with no marked coloring unless it be a cross between khaki and field-gray. Weather and time have conspired to render him inconspicuous. When he speaks his voice is produced with a careful effort to conserve energy. When he walks it seems to be a movement in answer to prayer rather than a physical fact.*

HANK

Say —

JONATHAN

How'd you get in here?

HANK

Well, it's this way, you see. The gate was open

out there and this looked pretty fine to me so I come in.

JONATHAN

You'd better go away before my uncle sees you.

HANK

Look here, young feller, I ain't goin' a-do no harm.

JONATHAN

Well, he doesn't allow strangers on the place.

HANK

I jus' come in to ask if I could sleep somewhere around here if I worked for my sleep and grub.

JONATHAN

No, he won't let you.

HANK

How do you know he won't?

JONATHAN

'Cause it's a rule.

[*Hank whistles a snatch of the strange air and sits down.*

HANK

Where's your pa?

JONATHAN

He's dead.

HANK

Long?

JONATHAN

Ten years ago.

HANK

How old are you?

JONATHAN

Fourteen.

HANK
Your pa died when you were four. So did mine.

JONATHAN
Did you ever have an uncle?

HANK
How many you got?

JONATHAN
I got two living and one dead.

HANK
All three of mine's dead.
[*He whistles a snatch of the strange air and takes a chew of tobacco.*
Where's your ma?

JONATHAN (*Is about to become impatient, but an innate tolerance causes him to answer*)
She died when I was twelve.

HANK
So did mine. (*Whistles*) We're alike in lots of ways, ain't we?

JONATHAN
What did you do when your mother died?

HANK
I felt pretty sorry.

JONATHAN
Did your brothers and sisters help you any?

HANK
Have you any brothers and sisters?

JONATHAN
No —

HANK
Me neither. (*Whistles casually*) No one took no notice of me.

JONATHAN
What'd you do?
HANK
I went away.
JONATHAN
Why didn't you try to work?
HANK
Couldn't find nothing suitable. 'T first I felt sort o' worried an' then I kep' walkin' on and I seen so much trouble where I went I says to myself, "Hank, you're lucky," I says. "You ain't got no fam'ly to bother you an' you ain't got nothing to worry you an' you don't have to get no place in partic'lar and you don't have to stay no place. A man wot's got a wife's all the time worrying about her health or her money spendin' or her gaddin' or her naggin'. An' a man w'ots got a fam'ly's always wondering where they'll end. An' a man's wot's got a home's all time worrying about keepin' it locked up. I bet the poor nut wot owns this place can't breathe easy for bein' scared things'll be took or burnt up. W'y you — look at you — (*Whistles*) You're wishin' I'd go 'cause you're 'fraid I'll take somethin'. I won't take nothin', young feller, 'cause I don't need nothin' now and I won't need nothin' till it's cold again — and then I'll git an overcoat maybe. It's too much trouble takin' things — 'cause you have to carry 'em. (*Whistles*) You goin' to let me sleep here some place?
JONATHAN
I can't. My uncle would drive you away. Maybe he'd have you arrested.

HANK
I ain't done nothin'. I ain't hurtin' nobody.
JONATHAN
Well, he doesn't allow strangers around.
HANK (*Whistles. At the window*)
That's where I went by jus' now.
JONATHAN
I heard you whistling.
HANK
That's a tune I made up once. (*Whistles*)
JONATHAN
Do you make up tunes?
HANK
That's the only one I ever done. It comes in handy and it don't hurt no one.
[*Jonathan unconsciously tries to whistle a phrase of the tune.*
HANK
No, that ain't it. It's this way.
[*Whistles.*
Jonathan tries it again and fails.
No. Here.
Jonathan makes it this time.
HANK
That's it. Say, what you got these bars for? It's like jail. Are they afraid you'll jump out on them rocks?
JONATHAN
No, I guess not. There isn't much danger of my wanting to jump out.
HANK
You never can tell for sure, young feller.
JONATHAN
It's to keep people from climbing in.

HANK
There ain't no bars over that one. (*Pointing to gable window*)

JONATHAN
That's too high.

HANK
It'd be like fallin' off the top of a house, wouldn't it?
[*Whistles.*
Jonathan whistles "All on a Summer's Day."

HANK
What you got there?

JONATHAN
That's my theatre.

HANK
A show?

JONATHAN
Yes.

HANK
How does it work?

JONATHAN
These are the actors.

HANK
What's the string fer?

JONATHAN
You put him in a groove and pull him.

HANK
Lemme see it.

JONATHAN
All right. I'll show you a scene from the play I'm going to play for my Uncle Nathaniel to-morrow.

HANK
Fire away.

[*Jonathan lights the lamps that are back of the screen and pulls the blinds or some cover over the barred windows.*

HANK

I wouldn't have all this junk if you'd give it to me. No, sir, when I move I carry my house with me and there ain't much o' that now. (*Indicates his clothes*)

JONATHAN

All ready. Now you sit there.

[*Places Hank on the bench.*

He goes behind the screen and taps some bells.

HANK

What's that fer?

JONATHAN

That's to get ready.

HANK

Well, I'm ready.

[*Jonathan opens the curtain and discloses a scene from Zenobia.*

That's beautiful. It's just like real.

[*Jonathan pulls a figure across the stage.*

Hello, old man. That's the one I jus' seen. Where's the string?

[*Jonathan lifts the string.*

JONATHAN

Here it is.

HANK

Now where's that feller goin' to?

JONATHAN (*coming out from behind the screen*)

Well, you see, *Zenobia* —

HANK

Zenob — God, what a name!

JONATHAN
They used to have names like that.
HANK
How d' you do it?
JONATHAN
Look, I'll show you a little.
[*He goes behind the screen and closes the curtain.*
HANK
What you doin' that for? I like to see that picture.
JONATHAN
I'm going to show you how I do it.
[*Jonathan rings the bells.*
HANK
All right. I'm ready. Let her go.
[*Jonathan opens the curtain and pulls a character on, then another.*
JONATHAN (*in assumed voice*)
" Hail, noble duke."
" All is well, I ween."
HANK
Say, are they talkin' to each other?
JONATHAN
Yes.
HANK
Which is the noble duke?
JONATHAN (*pulling a string*)
This one.
HANK
And the other one's name is Iween, ain't it?
JONATHAN
No, his name is Rollo.

JONATHAN MAKES A WISH
ACT I.

HANK
All right, fire ahead. I guess you know what you're doing.

JONATHAN (*in assumed voice*)
"Hail, noble duke."
"All is well, I ween."
"Not very well, noble duke."
"What is wrong?"
"Queen Zenobia is very mad, noble duke."
"What is she mad about, Rollo?"
[*Uncle John enters suddenly.*

JOHN
Jonathan —
[*He sees Hank.*
What does this mean?

HANK
I'm seein' a show.

JOHN
You get out of here this instant.

HANK
I ain't hurtin' nothin', mister, but I'll git out if you say so.

JOHN
What do you mean by this, Jonathan?

HANK
I'll git out. Thank you fer the show, boy.
[*He goes out whistling.*
John crosses to the door.

JOHN (*calling after Hank*)
Come on, get out of here quickly.

HANK (*off*)
I'm out, mister.

JOHN
Now, Jonathan, what do you mean by bringing such people into this place?

JONATHAN
I didn't bring him in. He came up while I was working.

JOHN
Do you call that silly stuff *working?*

JONATHAN
I was getting it ready for Uncle Nathaniel.

JOHN
He's been putting that nonsense in your head, has he?

JONATHAN
He asked me to let him see all my plays.

JOHN
I suppose he told you to ask that dirty tramp in here.

JONATHAN
No, sir. He didn't see the tramp.
[*Hank is heard whistling.*
John crosses to one of the windows and opens it.

JOHN (*calling*)
You get away from there. Move on.

HANK'S VOICE
I guess the roadside's free, mister.

JOHN
We'll see about that.
[*Hank whistles.*

JOHN
Jonathan, I won't have you waste your time on this stuff. I've been pretty lenient with you and I've allowed you to keep your toys because

Emily spoiled you; but you're too big for such things and I'm going to put my foot down right now. I'm not going to have this silly stuff around.

JONATHAN

Uncle Nathaniel doesn't think it's silly.

JOHN

I'll decide what is and is not good for you.

JONATHAN

The same thing isn't good for everybody.

JOHN

Don't talk back to me, young man.

JONATHAN

I've got a right to think.

JOHN

Jonathan!

JONATHAN

If my mother was living, she wouldn't call everything I like to do silly.

JOHN

Your mother didn't know what was good for you.

JONATHAN

My mother was the best woman in the world.

JOHN

That will do, Jonathan. Your mother was my sister and I am not saying anything against her. But I do say that stuff must go.

[*He starts for the door.*

JONATHAN

If this theatre goes, I go, too. I'm not —

[*John walks over to the theatre and sweeps the whole structure onto the floor.*

JOHN

Now.

JONATHAN

You dirty coward, you —

[*John turns upon the boy and strikes him across the face.*

In mingled rage and humiliation Jonathan sobs wildly once or twice, then controls himself and glares violently at his uncle.

JOHN

I'll let you think about it. I'll leave you here with your toys like a girl-baby.

[*He goes out the door, closing it and turning the key in the lock.*

Jonathan runs to the door.

JONATHAN

You let me out of here! You let me out of here!

[*He pounds the door with his fists.*

Then he turns in despair and humiliation.

He paces the floor a moment, not knowing what to do. Suddenly Hank's whistle is heard. The boy listens as though fascinated and goes to the window and watches Hank. Jonathan goes to his wrecked theatre and, taking it up, piles his manuscripts, the pink and the blue, on it. He hesitates to include one in the pile, offering once or twice to put it in his pocket, but he finally places it in grim determination with the others. Then he takes it off and stuffs it in his pocket. He stuffs the pile in the stove and sets a match to it, watches it a moment, then writes on a piece of paper, fastens it to the door. Then he finds a piece of rope on a packing case,

moves the ladder under the gable window, fastens the rope to a peg in the wall, climbs the ladder, considers a moment, returns to the stove with the beloved manuscript, stuffs it in the fire, remounts the ladder and lets his weight onto the rope. As he disappears from view, the rope breaks and a cry and sound of falling are heard.

The flames from the burning theatre and manuscripts flicker against the wall for a silent moment.

The key is heard to turn in the lock and John and Nathaniel enter.

JOHN
Jonathan!

NATHANIEL
He's hiding.

JOHN
Jonathan!

NATHANIEL (*Sees paper on door*)
What's this?

JOHN
What does it say?

NATHANIEL
"Good-bye! . . . Jonathan."

JOHN (*Looks suspiciously at Nathaniel*)
Did you tell the silly boy about your running away?

NATHANIEL
I told Jonathan nothing about myself. You are the head of the Clay family and out of custom I respected your position; but, by God, John, you're a failure with this boy.

JOHN
He —
[*Hank enters carrying Jonathan in his arms. Jonathan is limp and pitiful. His clothes are torn. He is moaning pitifully.*
HANK
He fell on the rocks out there.
NATHANIEL
Put him over here.
[*Hank places Jonathan on the bench near the piano. Nathaniel places the costume, which Susan left there, under his head for a pillow.*
JOHN
What was he doing?
HANK
He was —
NATHANIEL
This is no time for questions, John. Call a doctor.
[*Jonathan moans and rolls his head, looking vacantly at Hank now and then.*
JONATHAN (*moaning*)
Good-bye. . . . Jonathan.
JOHN
We'd better take him in the house.
JONATHAN
My mother was the best woman —
NATHANIEL
He'd better stay here until the doctor comes.
[*John exits.*
JONATHAN
All on a summer's day —
[*All the time Nathaniel has been passing his hands over Jonathan.*

HANK
He's out of his head, ain't he?
NATHANIEL
Perhaps, but sometimes one's heart speaks in a delirium.
HANK
He acts like his back's broke.
NATHANIEL
My God — his back!
[*Touches the boy's back.*
Jonathan winces with pain.
JONATHAN
My back's broken, Hank.
HANK
Listen, he's saying my name. We wuz pals, sure nuff.
JONATHAN
My back's broken, Hank.

Curtain.

ACT II

Six years have elapsed since Act I as years elapse in a boy's imaginings.

Throughout this act the characters are disclosed without reason as in a dream; and the movement of the act represents four terrors of a delirium — anxious effort to make oneself known, a feeling of fetters, climbing and a sudden fall.

JONATHAN BUILDS A FEAR

[Before the curtain rises the voices of Jonathan, Hank, Nathaniel and John are heard, muffled and far away.

HANK

He fell on the rocks out there.

NATHANIEL

Put him over here.

JOHN

What was he doing?

HANK

He was —

NATHANIEL

This is no time for questions, John. Call a doctor.

JONATHAN

Good-bye. . . . Jonathan.

JOHN

We'd better take him in the house.

JONATHAN

My mother was the best woman —

NATHANIEL

He'd better stay here until the doctor comes.

JONATHAN
All on a summer's day —

HANK
He's out of his head, ain't he?

NATHANIEL
Perhaps, but sometimes one's heart speaks in a delirium.

HANK
He acts like his back's broke.

NATHANIEL
My God — his back!

JONATHAN
My back's broken, Hank.

HANK
Listen, he's saying my name. We wuz pals, sure nuff.

JONATHAN
My back's broken, Hank.
[*The curtain has risen unnoticed. A faint light that grows steadily brighter as light does when one comes out of a swoon discloses Jonathan and Hank seated on a log at the left of the stage, where the bench had been. Jonathan seems much older, and he is crooked and dirty and unkempt, and Hank is somewhat brutalised, less negative.*

JONATHAN
My back's broken, Hank.
[*Hank looks at him.*
Tired?

HANK
Sure. . . .

JONATHAN
I think Uncle Nathaniel would help me if he saw me.
HANK
He couldn't do nothin' for you. You can't straighten a crooked back. . . .
JONATHAN
Hank, I'm tired of this and I'm going back.
HANK
Going back where?
JONATHAN
I'm going back home.
HANK
Your Uncle John won't let you in.
JONATHAN
Uncle Nathaniel will take me in.
HANK
He ain't there no more and besides he won't know you.
JONATHAN
Honest — don't you think he would?
HANK
Sure, he wouldn't.
JONATHAN
I wish I hadn't run away.
HANK
If you don't quit wishing I'll run away from you.
JONATHAN
You wouldn't leave me, would you, Hank?
HANK
Sure, I'd leave you. . . . What do you think I am — a wishing stone? . . . I want peace, I

do. . . . An' your wishing's disturbing my peace. . . . Every day fer six years you squeal about what you done. . . . Your Uncle John swatted you and you burned your theatre things and jumped out o' the window and broke your back and I saved you. . . .

JONATHAN

I can't do anything with a broken back!

HANK

What do you want to do anything for?

JONATHAN

Sometimes I'd like to write a little.

HANK

Go ahead. . . . I'll wait for you.

JONATHAN

And I'd like to give a show. You know, Hank, I used to want to be an actor. . . .

HANK

Sure, all kids want to be actors or go in a circus or do something where a lot o' people are lookin' on.

JONATHAN

But I can't be an actor now, because nobody'd want to look at me.

HANK

You act like that hump's ruined your life, when all you got to do's crouch over a little more and look sad and you can get anything you want. Why, it's money in your pocket, that's what that hump is; it's money in your pocket.

[*He closes the conversation by whistling.*

Say, go on over to that house and get us something to eat.

[*Jonathan prepares for the quest and Hank rolls over to go to sleep.*

As Jonathan crosses, lights disclose a hill with pleasant green slopes. At its foot stands a little cottage, all cool and pleasant with great glass doors. There are no locks and bolts to keep one out or to keep one in. A high plaster and brick wall flanks the cottage.

As Jonathan nears the cottage he meets Uncle John, whose austerity is more apparent than ever.

Jonathan cowers a moment, then attempts to smile.

JONATHAN
Hank said you'd turn me away if I came back.

JOHN
Were you talking to me, boy?

JONATHAN
I'm so sorry I ran away, Uncle John.

JOHN
Uncle John?

JONATHAN
Don't you know me, Sir?

JOHN
Indeed I do not.

JONATHAN
I'm Jonathan —

JOHN
Jonathan! My nephew Jonathan? — Ha! Ha!

JONATHAN
Don't you remember I didn't want to study engineering — I didn't want to go to Somerset School?

JOHN
Where is Jonathan?
JONATHAN
I'm Jonathan, sir. You remember I jumped out of the window and I tried to run away.
JOHN
You seem to know a lot about it. Where is Jonathan?
JONATHAN
I tell you I am Jonathan. . . . Don't you remember you struck me — You struck me across the face — that's what made me run away.
JOHN
I should have whipped him and put him to bed.
JONATHAN
I would have run away just the same, Uncle John.
JOHN
Don't call me Uncle John!
JONATHAN
But you are my Uncle John.
JOHN
I ask you where *is* Jonathan.
JONATHAN
Would you like to see him?
JOHN
I should like to know what has become of him.
JONATHAN
Would you let him come back home?
JOHN
No. When he ran away, I cast him out forever.
JONATHAN
Couldn't you forgive him if he was very, very

sorry for what he had done? . . . Couldn't you forgive me, sir? . . . I am Jonathan. Honest I am Jonathan.

JOHN

Don't try to deceive me. Jonathan was impudent as you are; but he was a Clay: he was straight and fine.

JONATHAN

But I broke my back.

JOHN

Tell me where Jonathan is, you imposter.

[*He takes Jonathan by the arm and twists it brutally.*

Tell me. . . . Tell me.

JONATHAN

I don't know. . . . Let me go. . . . I'm *not* Jonathan.

JOHN

Tell me. . . .

JONATHAN (*in desperation*)

He's dead.

JOHN

What!

JONATHAN

He's dead. He died somewhere.

JOHN

And so you tried to palm yourself off as Jonathan.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry.

JOHN

Don't you know you can't make your way with lies?

JONATHAN
Yes, sir.

JOHN
You ought to be whipped, but I suppose you don't know any better. I should have you arrested for vagrancy.
[*Jonathan winces.*
But I won't. I pity you, you dirty little beggar.
[*He starts to walk.*
You ought to wash your hands and face at least.

JONATHAN
Please, sir — one minute. . . . How are Mary and John third?

JOHN
Mary is ten — a big girl — and John third is eight — a strapping boy who will be a great help to me.

JONATHAN
And — how is Aunt Letitia?

JOHN
My aunt died of a broken heart.

JONATHAN
A broken heart?

JOHN
Because Jonathan ran away.
[*Jonathan buries his face in his arms.*
There! Don't cry for someone you've never seen. . . . Here, here, take this —
[*He presses a coin into Jonathan's hand and goes out.*
Jonathan looks at the coin, then after John, and seems to close his heart. He crosses to the sleeping Hank.

JONATHAN
Here, Hank.
HANK (*taking the coin*)
What'd he say?
JONATHAN
He didn't know me.
HANK
I guess you're not going back home now!
JONATHAN
No, I haven't any home.
HANK
Then quit your snifflin' an' go on over to that house.
JONATHAN
All right, Hank.
[*Hank curls up and goes to sleep again. Jonathan crosses to the cottage and finally summons the courage to knock on the door. As he does so the lights within grow bright and disclose a lovely little room with a beautiful piano in the centre. In a moment a young woman appears and opens the doors. It is Susan Sample. She is charmingly older; but she is dressed almost as she was in the old lumber room.*
JONATHAN
Please, Miss — why —
SUSAN
What do you want?
JONATHAN
I — don't you know me?
SUSAN
No, I don't know you, little boy. What do you want?

JONATHAN
I — don't you really know me?
SUSAN
I've never seen you before.
JONATHAN
I know you. . . . You're Susan Sample.
SUSAN
Who told you?
JONATHAN
I'm — (*He becomes conscious of his back*)
Why Jonathan told me.
SUSAN
Have you seen Jonathan?
JONATHAN
Yes.
SUSAN
Where is he?
JONATHAN
I don't know.
SUSAN
He ran away. Why doesn't he come home?
JONATHAN
Because — oh, I don't know.
SUSAN
Who are you?
JONATHAN
I'm a vagrant.
SUSAN
Are you hungry?
JONATHAN (*looking toward Hank*)
No. I'm not. . . . I'm not begging. . . .
But will you do something for me?
SUSAN
Yes, if I can.

JONATHAN MAKES A WISH
ACT II.

JONATHAN
Will you play for me?
SUSAN
Oh, yes. . . . What shall I play?
JONATHAN
Anything.
[*Jonathan notices his dirty hands.*
Excuse me a moment.
[*He goes to a bird-bath and washes his hands, wipes them and returns to the piano.*
Susan plays a bit of a nocturne with ease and grace.
JONATHAN
Do you remember this?
[*He hums "All on a Summer Day."*
SUSAN
Oh, yes.
[*She plays the tune in a sophisticated musical way, but Jonathan is disappointed.*
SUSAN
You don't like it?
JONATHAN
That isn't exactly the way it goes.
SUSAN
Oh, yes, it is.
[*She plays it once more and sings it.*
JONATHAN
No — no — no. It ought to go this way.
[*He sings it as he had sung it years before.*
SUSAN
You sing that just as Jonathan used to sing it.
JONATHAN
I like it that way.

SUSAN
Did Jonathan teach it to you?

JONATHAN
Yes. . . . A long time ago.

SUSAN
Did he tell you —

JONATHAN
About the lovely lady who danced to the tune? Oh, she was wonderful!

SUSAN
Jonathan ran away — and he never wrote to me or thought of me.

JONATHAN
He thought of you and he talked of you and he sang of you.

SUSAN
No . . . I can't believe that.

JONATHAN
Jonathan loves you very much.

SUSAN
If a man loves a woman very much he can't go away from her for years and years.

JONATHAN
Suppose Jonathan had pride and was ashamed to let you know that he had failed.

SUSAN
Jonathan wouldn't fail. I know Jonathan.

JONATHAN
He — Susan Sample!

[*Susan plays softly. She is lovely in the sunlight which is lengthening across the lawn.*

[*Jonathan watches her quietly. The love of the boy fans into flame and he reaches out to*

her, then in the consciousness of his deformity he turns away.

SUSAN

Will you tell me where Jonathan was when you last saw him?

JONATHAN

I don't know — The last time I saw Jonathan — he was tall and straight — and making his way.

SUSAN

Oh, well.

[*Albert Peet enters. He is a little man of immaculate appearance and great preciseness.*

ALBERT

Ah, Susan.

SUSAN

Albert, you are late.

ALBERT

Who is this?

SUSAN

This is a friend of Jonathan's.

ALBERT

Jonathan who?

SUSAN

Don't you remember Jonathan who had the toy theatre? He ran away from home.

ALBERT

Oh . . . and this is his friend? How do you do?

SUSAN

Do you remember this? I used to play it for you.

[*She begins "All on a Summer's Day."*

Jonathan and I made it up.

ALBERT (*laughing*)
Oh, yes.
SUSAN (*to Jonathan*)
Come on and sing it.
[*Jonathan is not sure of the status of Albert Peet.*
[*Susan plays and she and Jonathan sing with great feeling.*
ALBERT (*looking at his watch.*
Well, all this is very pleasant indeed, but we'll have to go, Susan dear.
[*At the "Susan, dear" Jonathan turns quickly and sees the two holding hands. Susan holds up her left hand and shows an engagement ring on it. Jonathan is utterly crushed.*
JONATHAN
I think I'd better say good-bye.
[*He takes up his cap.*
SUSAN
Good-bye. If you see Jonathan, tell him I'm going to marry Albert Peet. He'll know.
ALBERT
Good-bye.
[*Albert and Susan walk off happily in the sunshine.*
Jonathan looks after them.
Mlle. Perrault enters followed by Mary and John 3rd. Mlle. Perrault's dress is almost like the one she had worn when she first met Jonathan in the lumber-room, except that the colors are reversed and more brilliant. Mary is a lovely little yellow-haired child of ten and John 3rd is a stoical matter-of-fact boy of eight.

The two children are evidently very fond of Mlle. Perrault, as fond as Jonathan and Susan had seemed. If the children seem thoughtless and cruel, it is because they are children and life has not yet laid a hard hand upon them. The sun rays are very low against the wall now so that anyone walking near it will cast a very heavy shadow.

MARY

John, look — he's a hunchback.

MLLE. PERRAULT

'Sh! Children.

[*The children whisper.*

Jonathan turns and seeing Mlle. Perrault smiles.

How do you do, little man.

JONATHAN

I am well, I thank you.

MLLE. PERRAULT

What are you doing here?

JONATHAN

I am with Hank.

MLLE. PERRAULT

Hank?

JONATHAN

Yes, Hank's my pal. There he is — asleep.

MLLE. PERRAULT

Oh, what a dreadful person. . . . Children, don't go near him.

JONATHAN

He's not so bad.

MLLE. PERRAULT

But he is a vagrant — a tramp. Why does he do nothing?

JONATHAN
He's happier that way.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Are you his son?
JONATHAN
Oh, no.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Where is your mother?
JONATHAN
My mother's dead.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Where did she live?
JONATHAN (*Looks for a trace of recognition*)
I'd better not tell you.
MARY
Oh, please tell us.
JONATHAN
I'd better not.
MARY
You ask him, John.
JOHN III
Uh-uh!
MARY
Why not?
JOHN III
I don't want to know.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Why don't you want to tell *us?* We won't tell anybody.
JONATHAN
Nobody'll believe me.
MARY
Why?

JONATHAN
You see, I ran away from home —
JOHN III
When you run away from home, you're no good.
MARY
Now, John, that isn't always so.
JOHN III
It is.
MARY
It isn't. Goldilocks and the Babes in the Wood and the Marquis of Carabas were all good, and they ran away from home.
JOHN III
But they had bad homes.
MARY
Was your home bad?
JONATHAN
I thought it was.
JOHN III
You thought it was. But was it?
JONATHAN
No.
JOHN III
Then you're no good.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Oh, John.
JOHN III
No, he isn't. Grandfather said nobody who ran away from home was any good!
MARY
Why did you run away from home?
JONATHAN
I mustn't tell.

MARY
Oh, you won't tell anything!
JOHN III (*pointing to Hank*)
What did you say *he* was, Ma'mselle?
MLLE. PERRAULT
He is a vagrant —
MARY AND JOHN III
What's a vagrant?
MARY
Ooh —
[*Puts up her hand to make a wish.*
JOHN III
Aw, I'm not going to make a wish. Grandfather'll get it for me anyway if I want it.
MARY
Now, John Clay III —
[*Jonathan looks up quickly.*
You always spoil things.
JONATHAN
Is that Mary Clay and John Clay?
MLLE. PERRAULT
Yes.
JONATHAN
They don't remember Jonathan, do they?
MLLE. PERRAULT
You mean Jonathan who ran away?
JONATHAN
Yes, ma'am.
MARY
Who's Jonathan?
JOHN III
He's David's friend. I know that. And he was very good.

MLLE. PERRAULT
What do you know about Jonathan?
JONATHAN
I knew him once —
MLLE. PERRAULT
He was a splendid little man! He could make such lovely songs.
JONATHAN
Do you remember the one he and Susan Sample made up?
MLLE. PERRAULT
Let's see — how did it go?
[*Hums a little — tries several folk tunes. The children edge up to Jonathan during this and manage to touch his back several times, each keeping count. Jonathan smiles at them, thinking it's attention.*
JONATHAN
No, it went this way.
[*He sings a little of the song and Mlle. Perrault joins him. As he stops singing she switches the time to waltz time and begins to sway to it. The music is taken up as by a dream-orchestra and Mlle. Perrault dances a very lovely little waltz.*
JOHN III
Oh, look at your shadow!
[*Mlle. Perrault turns and sees her shadow on the wall.*
I can make a bigger one than that.
MARY
Oh, come on, ma'mselle, let's all make shadows.
[*The three of them stand in front of the wall.*

JOHN III
Boy, you come, too.
MLLE. PERRAULT
Come, boy.
[*Jonathan joins them standing so that his deformity doesn't show in the shadow.*
Now, let's dance — Give me your hand — so.
[*The four dance, while Mlle. Perrault hums "All on a Summer's Day." They are having a very good time when Susan and Albert enter. Jonathan is a little conscious of Susan and Albert, and he manages to make several awkward moves.*
MLLE. PERRAULT
Now, let's make everybody's shadow dance by itself.
MARY
Oh, come on.
JOHN III
You first, Mlle.
MARY
It's your turn, Mlle.
[*Mlle. Perrault stands before the wall and makes a very lovely shadow.*
John, you do it now.
JOHN III
I won't. I'm going to be next to last. . .
He's going to be last.
[*Mary makes a pretty "statue."*
MARY
Now, John —
[*John III, holding a staff, stands bow-legged and pigeon-toed.*
All of them laugh.

MLLE. PERRAULT (*to John III*)
You little Jackanapes! You!
JOHN III (*to Jonathan*)
You can't do that.
[*Jonathan, still conscious of Susan, but more in the spirit of the game nevertheless, laughs almost gleefully.*
JONATHAN
You just wait.
[*He stands in front of the wall and does some comical movements with his feet and legs, then he turns in such a way that for the first time the shadow of his hump is thrown into a pitiful distortion on the wall. He doesn't see it at first, for he is lost in the game with the children.*
JOHN III (*yelling suddenly*)
Oh, look!
[*The children laugh immoderately, and Jonathan turns his head quickly, but in so doing alters the shadow. He smiles joyfully and then once more falls into the distorted picture.*
MARY
Ooh —
JOHN III
That's funnier than mine.
[*Jonathan turns his head this time and sees the full horror of the thing.*
Mlle. Perrault and Susan have realized too late to protect Jonathan.
MLLE. PERRAULT
John! Mary! Tell the little boy good-bye. We must go.
[*Jonathan looks toward Susan and Albert.*

There is pity in Susan's eyes and a smile in Albert's.

SUSAN

Albert, come — let's go!

[*They pass into the house.*

JOHN III (*Almost as Susan speaks.*

Wasn't he funniest of all!

MLLE. PERRAULT

Now, run along, children. Run along.

MARY

Look, I can make a hump-back.

JOHN III

So can I.

MARY

Not a good one!

JOHN III

You can't touch mine.

[*He smacks Mary on the back and runs off, Mary following him.*

MLLE. PERRAULT

Little man, I'm very sorry. You mustn't let them hurt you. They are only children.

JONATHAN

Yes, ma'am. . . . Thank you.

MLLE. PERRAULT

May I do something for you?

JONATHAN

No, ma'am . . . if you please . . . I must go to Hank.

MLLE. PERRAULT

Here, take this —

[*She offers a coin.*

JONATHAN

Oh, no, ma'am. . . .

[*He puts his hand behind him.*

MLLE. PERRAULT

I am sorry. . . . Very, very sorry.

JONATHAN

Yes, ma'am.

[*Mlle. Perrault goes out silently, and in a moment she is heard to call* "Marie"—"John," *and a distant answer is heard.*

Susan comes to the door and sees Jonathan. She crosses to him. He looks at her almost with madness in his eyes.

SUSAN

They didn't mean to hurt you.

[*She lays her hand on his arm.*

JONATHAN

Yes, I know.

[*There is a moment of the tenderest, most understanding silence. He turns away.*

Susan starts to reach in her bag, she even takes her purse out; but she replaces it unopened, and instead of bestowing alms, she takes a flower from her hair and presses it in Jonathan's hands.

He looks at her with years of pent-up gratitude loosed from his heart.

Silently, she turns away and goes into the house. Jonathan, left alone, turns so that his hump once more shows in the most distorted shadow. He lifts the flower and for a single moment, its shadow rises above the shadow of the hump, a tiny cross on his little Calvary. Then he lays the flower against his cheek and sits upon the log near Hank.

Hank awakens.

HANK (*looking up stupidly*)
What you got?
JONATHAN (*hiding the flower*)
Nothing.
HANK
Come across, Humpy.
JONATHAN
Don't you call me that!
HANK
So — ho! What you yelling at me for?
[*He sits up.*
JONATHAN
Nothing. . . . I didn't mean to yell.
HANK
What you got there?
JONATHAN
I tell you I haven't got anything, Hank.
HANK
Come on. Come across.
JONATHAN
It's not for you.
HANK
Come on.
JONATHAN (*Rises and moves away*)
No.
HANK
Gimme it here. . . .
[*He grabs Jonathan and tears the flower from his hand.*
JONATHAN
Stop that!
HANK
Great God! (*Throwing the crushed petals on the ground*) Say, what's the matter with you?

JONATHAN

I tell you, I'm going back. . . . I'm going back to my home. . . . I'm going to find my Uncle Nathaniel. I know he'll take me in. He won't blame me because I'm a cripple. . . . I know. . . . I know. . . . Didn't he say, " Poor Jonathan "? . . .

[*At this moment Nathaniel enters, and the two stand face to face as they had stood in the lumber-room at their first meeting.*

Hank slinks away.

Nathaniel is untouched by the years. Jonathan looks at him hopefully, but there is no glint of recognition in Nathaniel's eye.

JONATHAN (*timidly*)

Uncle Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

What did you say, my boy?

JONATHAN (*Less and less audible, as his disappointment increases*)

Uncle Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

I can't hear you.

JONATHAN

You — are — my — Uncle Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

Come, come, my boy. I can't hear you.

JONATHAN

Aren't you — Mr. — Nathaniel — Clay?

NATHANIEL (*kindly, but as to a stranger*)

Yes, I am Mr. Nathaniel Clay.

[*Jonathan smiles one of his old half smiles.*

JONATHAN

My name's — Jonathan.

NATHANIEL
Jonathan! . . . I had a nephew whose name was Jonathan.

JONATHAN
Don't you know me?

NATHANIEL
You must forgive me, little man — but I do not remember you. Boys grow so quickly.

JONATHAN
Don't you remember *Zenobia?*

NATHANIEL
Zenobia? Who was she?

JONATHAN
Don't you remember the little theatre?

NATHANIEL
Oh, yes, my nephew Jonathan had a little toy theatre, and he wrote a play called *Zenobia.* . . . He burnt them.

JONATHAN
Was it wrong to burn them?

NATHANIEL
I don't know. You see Jonathan ran away, and I have never seen him since.

JONATHAN
Do you blame him?

NATHANIEL
Well, I can't say. When a fine boy like Jonathan runs away from home, he may have what he considers a good reason.

JONATHAN
Don't you know why he ran away?

NATHANIEL
I think I know.

JONATHAN
Would you tell me why?
NATHANIEL
That wouldn't do any good, my boy. . . . If you had an uncle who liked you very much, would you run away?
JONATHAN
No, sir — not if I had another chance. . . .
NATHANIEL
What do you mean?
JONATHAN
Don't you really know me?
NATHANIEL
I'm sorry — no!
JONATHAN (*pointing to Hank*)
Do you know him?
NATHANIEL
That tramp?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir. . . . That's Hank.
NATHANIEL
Hank?
JONATHAN
Yes, the one I ran away with.
NATHANIEL
Did you run away, too?
JONATHAN
Yes, sir; I jumped out the window, and I fell and broke my back. Hank said —
NATHANIEL
What a dirty man!
JONATHAN
He's my pal.

NATHANIEL
You're evidently a fine young man inside.
JONATHAN
Oh, I'm sorry, sir, that I ran away.
NATHANIEL
You can't undo the past, my boy, but you can make the future.
JONATHAN
I can't straighten my back.
NATHANIEL
Perhaps not, but you can straighten your life.
JONATHAN
I'm only a beggar, sir.
NATHANIEL
There is something everybody can do.
JONATHAN
There isn't any place for me. . . .
NATHANIEL
My boy, there is a place for everybody who wants a place.
JONATHAN
Do you remember what your nephew wanted to do?
NATHANIEL
Yes, he wanted to write plays and run a theatre and be an actor.
JONATHAN
I couldn't ever be an actor, could I?
NATHANIEL
No, my boy.
JONATHAN
Supposing you had your heart set on something and couldn't do it, what would you do?

NATHANIEL
I'd not give up. . . . I'd try something else.
JONATHAN
Supposing I were your nephew, what would you do?
NATHANIEL
I'd find out what you wanted to be.
JONATHAN
Don't I look like Jonathan?
NATHANIEL
Jonathan must be very tall now.
JONATHAN
If Jonathan weren't tall?
NATHANIEL
But he *is* tall and splendid. I know Jonathan! And he's doing what he set out to do.
JONATHAN
I hope you'll find him, sir, and I hope he'll make you proud.
NATHANIEL (*very earnestly*)
My boy, how old are you?
JONATHAN
I'm twenty.
NATHANIEL
Twenty. . . . Will you try to pull yourself out of the rut?
JONATHAN
What do you mean, sir?
NATHANIEL
Look at that man. What is he to you?
JONATHAN
He's my pal.

NATHANIEL
You mustn't waste your life on such emptiness as his.
JONATHAN
I'm going to try, sir. . . . And if I make good, will you believe I'm Jonathan?
NATHANIEL
I'll believe you are you. . . . Here. . . .
[*He offers Jonathan a coin.*
JONATHAN
Oh, no, sir. . . . I can't — from you —
NATHANIEL
Well, you are a strange beggar —
JONATHAN
I'm not a beggar at heart. . . . I don't want to be what I am. But I don't know which way to turn. I'm all mixed up.
NATHANIEL
All mixed up?
[*Nathaniel turns and looks toward the hill.*
Boy, there is a green hill far away. Climb to the top of it, look about and you will see —
JONATHAN
I know: the whole wide world!
NATHANIEL
Exactly.
JONATHAN
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
Go to the hilltop alone — and cry out to your heart's content.— There's nothing like a hilltop to make a man feel worth while!
JONATHAN
I knew that, sir; but I forgot it. I'm going —

NATHANIEL
Good-bye, boy; God bless you.
[*The two clasp hands and Nathaniel goes.*

JONATHAN
He believes in me. . . .
[*He watches Nathaniel with wide eyes, then calls to Hank.*
Hank! Hank!

HANK
What you want?

JONATHAN
He didn't know me!

HANK
Who didn't know you?
[*Hank lies down.*

JONATHAN
Uncle Nathaniel. . . . He just passed by. . . .
But, Hank, he believed in me! He believed I'd make good.

HANK
Say, what's the matter with you today?

JONATHAN
I'm goin' to leave you, Hank.

HANK
Huh?

JONATHAN
Old pal, I'm going to leave you forever.
You've stuck by me —

HANK
Sure, I've stuck by you.
[*Makes himself comfortable.*
Ain't you saved me a heap o' trouble?

JONATHAN

But I'm going now, Hank. Good-bye. I'm going to the green hill far away.

[He starts away leaving Hank alone and asleep. The lights fade out.

Soft music is heard through the darkness and slowly the outline of the green hill appears close at hand. Jonathan outlined against the sky appears at the edge of the hill, climbing with difficulty.

NATHANIEL (*The voice is heard with the music*)

Nine ninety-nine — one thousand. You're nearly there, Boy.

JONATHAN

Nine hundred and ninety-nine — one thousand — I'm almost there.

NATHANIEL (*far away*)

A thousand and one — a thousand and two —

JONATHAN

A thousand and one, a thousand and two — I am here!

NATHANIEL (*far away*)

The world is here.

JONATHAN (*as though addressing the world*)

Listen. . . . I ran away. I ran away. I was fourteen. I saw visions of great things. I heard voices of the past and the future. I wanted to tell what I saw and heard. . . . Oh, you who made sport of my dreams, I am here at the top of the world! Uncle John, I have heard things you will never hear, and I have seen things you will never see.

JOHN (*far away*)

But your back's broken.

JONATHAN

Oh, Susan — Susan Sample — see — see. I told you I wasn't a beggar. See — see — Jonathan stands at the top of the world!

SUSAN (*faintly*)

But your back's broken.

JONATHAN

Oh, people of all the world, I am a boy who asks you to hear me and to understand. I only wanted to work out *my* way. . . . I planned my way because I couldn't help it — I wanted to build my own world — alone. . . . I climbed clear to the top — Jonathan stands before you —

VOICES

Jonathan's dead.

JONATHAN

Dead? . . . Oh, see the wreck of everything. . . . Jonathan *is* dead!

[*He falls.*

NATHANIEL

Boy — boy — Jonathan! — I believe you are you.

JONATHAN

Uncle Nathaniel!

[*He rises slowly.*

Oh, people of all the world, my Uncle Nathaniel understands.— I speak for all the boys of all times. Have patience — patience and understanding. Don't you remember when you were young? We come to you with hopes and dreams and wishes and fears,— and these are the things that life is made of —

NATHANIEL
I am here, Jonathan.
JONATHAN
I'm coming to you. I'm coming back to you with all my hopes and dreams.
NATHANIEL
We're waiting for you, Jonathan.
JONATHAN
I've made my wish that's coming true!!
[*He jumps into space.*

Curtain.

ACT III

JONATHAN MAKES A WISH

[The scene is a summer house on the estate of John Clay. It is charmingly furnished with wicker chairs and a table. The building is hexagon shape and we look into half the hexagon. The doors at the left open on to the path that leads from the house. The doors at the back open onto a garden path that leads to a gate. Eight weeks have elapsed since the first act.

The curtain rises disclosing an empty stage. It is early evening and sunset is leaving only the faintest tinge above the hills. After a moment Jonathan enters. He is unchanged except that he still carries in his eyes some of the horror of his delirium. He opens the back windows and then sits above the table and begins to look at an illustrated paper.

Nathaniel enters carrying a manuscript. He seems a bit less carefree than at his homecoming, and he also seems closer to Jonathan.

NATHANIEL

Well, my boy —

JONATHAN

Uncle Jonathan, did you know that Caproni was an artist?

NATHANIEL

You mean the Caproni who makes the wonderful aeroplanes?

JONATHAN
Yes, sir.
NATHANIEL
No, I didn't know it; but I'm not surprised.
JONATHAN
Aren't these pictures fine?
NATHANIEL
Excellent.
JONATHAN
He made them. . . . They're like great dragon-flies, aren't they?
NATHANIEL
A whole swarm of them.
JONATHAN
It must feel funny to fly through air.
NATHANIEL
Would you like to try it some time?
JONATHAN
Yes . . . but I'd have to get used to it. . . . It must be like diving.
NATHANIEL
When you were very ill you seemed to imagine you were falling.
JONATHAN
Did I talk much when I was unconscious?
NATHANIEL
You talked almost continuously.
JONATHAN
Did I? . . . You said you'd tell me what I said — when I was strong enough. . . . I'm pretty strong now.
NATHANIEL
Do you know what I did?

JONATHAN
I don't know.
NATHANIEL (*showing manuscript*)
Can you guess?
JONATHAN (*Looks at manuscript*)
"Jonathan Builds a Fear." What does that mean?
NATHANIEL
When you were delirious I listened to what you said and then I made a story out of it.
JONATHAN
You mean this is all about me?
NATHANIEL
It's about a little hunchback who thought he was you.
JONATHAN
I know. I was always trying to make somebody know me, and finally I thought I jumped from the top of a hill and I seemed to be falling for years and years. . . .
NATHANIEL
Those were terrible days, my boy, and do you know, we were afraid you wouldn't live.
JONATHAN
It was a terrible feeling.
NATHANIEL
I know, but all that's over now; and there's the whole story about the little hunchback you never were.
JONATHAN
[*Hank's whistle is heard. Jonathan rises very quickly and looks at Nathaniel.*

NATHANIEL
He comes every now and then to ask about you and to get something to eat.
[*Hank whistles again.*
HANK'S VOICE (*at back*)
Hi!
NATHANIEL
Come in, Hank.—
HANK
Is the old man here?
NATHANIEL
No.
HANK (*Enters through the gateway whistling*)
Hello, boy.
JONATHAN
I'm well now. How are you?
HANK
I'm beginning to get cold, so I think I'll go south tomorrow and I thought I'd drop in to say good-bye.
NATHANIEL
I'll give you an overcoat, Hank.
HANK
No, thanks. It's too hot to carry it. I'll get one when I really need it, maybe.
NATHANIEL
Well, here's something for you.
[*He offers him a five dollar bill.*
Five dollars! No, thanks. If I had that much money I'd lose it maybe. Give me two bits and call it square.
[*Nathaniel hands him a quarter.*
Thanks. . . . Well . . . good-bye. . . . I'm glad your back wasn't broke.

JONATHAN
Good-bye, Hank.

HANK
Good-bye, Mister. . . . I'll see you next year maybe, when it's warm.— Say, kid, I'd like to see that *Zenobia* show again: —" Hail, noble duke," " All's well, Irene." " Not very well, noble duke."

[*He goes out, chuckling to himself. Aunt Letitia enters. As usual she has something to keep her hands busy. She seats herself comfortably in a chair that custom has evidently made her very own. In her work she shows the effect of time upon her eyes and she may feel a tiny draught that causes her to close the doors behind her and draw her scarf a bit more closely about her. Never has Aunt Letitia seemed more successfully the poor relation.*

LETITIA
I thought you were out with John.

NATHANIEL
No.

[*Jonathan is looking at the manuscript.*

LETITIA (*to Jonathan*)
How do you feel, dear?

JONATHAN
Fine; . . . I think I'll go in the house and read this.

(*To Nathaniel*)
I'm glad it isn't true.

[*He goes out.*

NATHANIEL
It's the story of his delirium. I thought it would interest him — and relieve him.

LETITIA
Has John gone?
NATHANIEL
Only for a stroll — the doctor's orders.
LETITIA
Well?
NATHANIEL
Well?
LETITIA
Sit down.
NATHANIEL
In John's chair?
LETITIA
If you wish.
NATHANIEL
John's chair! The throne of the head of the family! (*He sits in John's chair*) Well?
LETITIA
Nathaniel dear, you are making John very unhappy.
NATHANIEL
And John has made me very unhappy, dearest Aunt Letty.
LETITIA
The feeling at the dinner table was almost unbearable tonight. There we sat strained and silent.
NATHANIEL
I am sorry. I try to avoid meals with John as much as possible.
LETITIA
You've been here eight weeks and John and I know nothing of you. For me it is enough that you are here; but John is the head of the fam-

ily and he feels that you ought to treat him with greater deference.

NATHANIEL

It is revolting to me to have a tsar in the family.

LETITIA

Your father and your father's father and grandfather were rulers of the Clay family.

NATHANIEL

I don't question that.

LETITIA

You can't change John.

NATHANIEL

I don't want to change John.

LETITIA

Then why not tell him something about yourself?

NATHANIEL

It is none of John's affairs how or why I live. It is none of his affair how or why or when I shall marry Mlle. Perrault.

LETITIA

Perhaps not.

NATHANIEL

When I tell him anything, Aunt Letty, it will be one thing — I have stayed here because I love Jonathan, because he needs me. And I have listened to the boy's fears and to his hopes as they came out of his poor tortured little soul in his delirium. I have watched him during his convalescence, and I see in him a growing man in prison. John sees in him only the potential head of the family; but he is my flesh and blood as much as he is John's and I intend to set him free.

LETITIA

My beloved Nathaniel, John will not give Jonathan up to you.

NATHANIEL

I don't want Jonathan unless he wants to come to me, but I do want Jonathan's freedom.

LETITIA

Isn't he a bit young to have *freedom.*

NATHANIEL

Aunt Letitia, I don't mean a silly license.— I mean freedom. If you are cultivating a peach-tree you don't expect oranges on it even if it could wish to be an orange tree, but you can help to make it bear better peaches. Jonathan isn't a mechanical business person. His bent is in another direction.

LETITIA

What are you going to do?

NATHANIEL

Frankly, I do not know.

[*Up to window.*

All I know now is that I shall stay here until I find a plan.

[*Jonathan enters.*

JONATHAN

Where is Uncle John?

NATHANIEL

He has gone for a stroll.

LETITIA

What do you want, my dear?

JONATHAN

Uncle John sent word that he wanted to see me here at 7:30.

[*Letitia and Nathaniel look at each other. Jonathan takes out a large silver watch.*

It's 7:29 now.

NATHANIEL

John will be on time — count sixty slowly —

[*John enters. He is rather pale, seems preoccupied and even more unapproachable then ever.*

LETITIA

Did you have a pleasant stroll?

JOHN

I wasn't walking.

LETITIA

I shall go into the house, I think.

JOHN

No, Aunt Letitia, I would rather you'd wait, if you please.

[*Nathaniel is an interested spectator. He cannot understand why Jonathan should be present for what will probably be an eventful family scene.*

Nathaniel, will you sit down?

NATHANIEL

Certainly.— Where?

JOHN (*tartly*)

Would you like my chair?

NATHANIEL

Thank you.

[*He sits in John's chair, much to John's annoyance.*

JOHN

Jonathan, sit down.

[*Jonathan sits. John also sits. Aunt Letitia knows what to expect. Nathaniel is more curi-*

ous than angry. Jonathan is attending his first family conference.

Jonathan, I've sent for you because I want to talk to you seriously.

JONATHAN

Yes, sir.

NATHANIEL

Do you think the boy is strong enough?

JOHN

The doctor told me today that he would be quite equal to it. . . . Eight weeks ago, Jonathan, you made an effort to run away from your home, because I punished you. In your foolish defiance of all family authority you suffered a fall that might have resulted in a lasting and serious injury. Fortunately you have recovered fully from the result of your fall.

NATHANIEL

Excuse me, John, but all of us know this.

JOHN

One moment, please, Nathaniel. . . . I have now arranged that you begin your preparation for your life work immediately. You will leave for Somerset School the day after tomorrow.

JONATHAN (*desperately*)

Uncle John, I don't want to go to Somerset School.

JOHN

You will leave for Somerset day after tomorrow. Good night, Jonathan.

NATHANIEL

Why Somerset?

JOHN

Good night, Jonathan.

[*Jonathan, dazed, goes out.*

NATHANIEL

Jonathan will never go to Somerset School.

JOHN

Nathaniel, you forfeited your rights in the family councils when you ran away from home seventeen years ago.

NATHANIEL

This boy will run away again and again and I mean to save him from what I have suffered, if I can.

JOHN

Nathaniel, by what right do you attempt to interfere with my decisions?

NATHANIEL

By the right of blood and understanding.

JOHN

Blood and understanding? Where were you when Emily had to leave her husband and brought her boy into my home. Where were you when Emily died? I took Emily in and I took her boy in. As head of the family it was my duty to do so and as head of the family it is my duty to see that the boy is brought up in the best traditions of the family.

NATHANIEL

John, you can't force this boy into a mold.

JOHN

A boy of fourteen doesn't know his mind. . . . Do *you* know what Jonathan wants to be?

NATHANIEL

Yes, a writer of plays, a theatre director, and an actor.

JOHN

Imagine! . . . And I suppose you encouraged him.

NATHANIEL

No, but I didn't discourage him. The selection was wide enough for him to find some lasting life work.

JOHN

He never told me he wanted to be an actor.

NATHANIEL

Oh, my brother, every growing boy has a deep secret wish that he cannot bring himself to disclose! As you know, I always wanted to be a writer, but most of all I wanted to be a left-handed base ball pitcher. And although I'm irretrievably right handed I used to practice — religiously — pitching with my left hand.

JOHN

That was juvenile foolishness.

NATHANIEL

Yes, but it was genuine.

[*John starts to speak.*

What am I now? I am going to tell you, John — by and by. First, we must dispose of the boy.

JOHN

I shall decide about the boy.

NATHANIEL

No, John; the boy must decide for himself.

JOHN

He'd decide to be an actor.

NATHANIEL

If he did, what of it?

JOHN

I want members of my family to do useful work.

NATHANIEL

What *is* useful work? An actor serves his purpose just as a plumber or lawyer serves his. . . . The only difference is that all of us are not plumbers or lawyers while all of us *are* actors. Yes, John, we're all playing something — you are playing at head of the family, I'm —

JOHN

Still I do not regard acting as a worth-while or lucrative profession.

NATHANIEL

You never know, John. . . . Five generations ago the Clays were respectable carpenters. They weren't wealthy and they gave no promise of becoming wealthy. Then suddenly our revered ancestor became a successful maker of cypress drain pipes — sewer pipes, I think we used to call them! The family fortunes were founded!! Our ancestor bought a high hat and the esteem of his neighbors. Cypress was in time replaced by pottery. Conduits for wires and terra cotta building materials were added to our achievements and then in your régime superfine sewers became a specialty.

JOHN

Every kind of concrete work!

NATHANIEL

I beg your pardon! Concrete sewers and other concrete things.— Such is the foundation of the family.

JOHN
You are evidently ashamed of our business.
NATHANIEL
Not at all, but I cannot consider the manufacturing of sewers a greater achievement than acting.
JOHN
Nathaniel, are you an actor?
NATHANIEL
No.
JOHN
What are you?
NATHANIEL
For the present I am Jonathan's uncle.
JOHN
You have nothing to do with Jonathan.
NATHANIEL
The boy is not going to Somerset School.
JOHN
Nathaniel, I shall not tolerate your interference. Now I must ask you to leave this house.
NATHANIEL
What?
LETITIA
John . . . Nathaniel . . . my boys, it isn't my way to interfere; but please for my sake, for your mother's sake — think what you're doing.
JOHN (*With some tenderness he lays his hand on Letitia's*)
I have thought, Aunt Letitia. I can not allow this boy's life to be ruined as Emily's and Henry's and Nathaniel's were.
NATHANIEL
Ruined? John, I'll tell you how ruined my

life has been and I'll tell you in terms you'll understand. My income last year was over $350,000!

JOHN

Are you acting now?

NATHANIEL

Yes, I'm acting — I'm acting in terms that you will understand. . . . You know that I'm your brother Nathaniel. Do you know who else I am? I am a writer and a playwright and a director in the United Baking Company and a stockholder in the National Munitions Company — munitions, John; think of it, millions, millions in them — and I'm willing and eager to take Emily's boy and educate him in the way he wants to live his life.

JOHN

What are these heroics?

NATHANIEL

I mean what I say. If need be I shall use brute force, financial force or any kind of force to free Jonathan from the misery that I endured in this house.

JOHN

You had everything you wanted.

NATHANIEL

Everything except freedom to think my own thoughts. John, some people are like reinforced concrete. Someone builds the iron frame and the wooden molds, then pours the cement and when it has hardened, the molds are removed and lo, you have a monolith — a solid unchangeable stone.

JOHN
You talk very well, Nathaniel, but I shall insist upon bringing up my sister's child in my way.

NATHANIEL
Would you have him run away as I did?

JOHN
He will never run away again. He has had his lesson.

[*Jonathan enters carrying a suit case.*

JONATHAN
May I speak to you, Uncle John?

JOHN
What are you doing with that suit case?

JONATHAN
I'm going away.

JOHN
Who gave you permission?

JONATHAN
Nobody. . . I've been thinking since a little while ago and at first I thought I'd run away again; but that wouldn't be quite fair — so I came to tell you.

JOHN
Take that suit case back into the house.

JONATHAN
No, sir! I'm going and nobody can keep me here unless they tie me.

JOHN
Well, I'll tell you one thing — if you leave this house without my permission I'll cut you off without a penny and you'll never be allowed to come back again.

JONATHAN

Yes, sir. I know that; but I'm going and I came to tell you good-bye.

JOHN

Very well. You've made your choice — and I never want to see you again as long as you live. Good-bye, Jonathan. Good-bye, Nathaniel.

LETITIA

John, don't say things you'll regret. Jonathan doesn't mean what he's saying.

JONATHAN

Yes'm, I do mean what I say.

JOHN

Good night.

[*He goes out.*

LETITIA

Boys, you are so hot-headed — so much alike. . . .

NATHANIEL

You dear, you have always been content to compromise while we two must go our own ways or not at all. You go to John. Help him as you can. He's not a bad man — he's just a structure of reinforced concrete. You love John and he in his way loves you. Go to John and comfort his outraged authority.

LETITIA

I'm sorry things have turned out this way. (*She kisses them*) Good night, my dears. Wait until morning if you can, my darling Nathaniel.

[*She goes out.*

NATHANIEL

Now you've done it!

JONATHAN
I couldn't help it.
NATHANIEL
What are you going to do?
JONATHAN
I don't know. . . . They say there's plenty of work on farms.
NATHANIEL
You can't write if you work on a farm.
JONATHAN
I can earn some more money and save. Other boys have worked their way through school and college. I can do that.
NATHANIEL
Of course — that is a way out of it. Yes . . . of course. . . .
[*Nathaniel opens the back doors and sees the thinnest crescent moon hanging in the sky.*
The new moon. . . . They say if you make a wish on the new moon it will come true.
JONATHAN
You have to see it over your right shoulder.
NATHANIEL
You saw it over your right shoulder.
JONATHAN
I don't believe that, do you?
NATHANIEL
Well, suppose it were true, what would you wish?
JONATHAN
You mean for right away?
NATHANIEL
Yes.

JONATHAN (*carefully looking over his right shoulder.*
I'd wish to be with you.

NATHANIEL
More than anything?

JONATHAN
Yes, sir.

NATHANIEL
More than being a writer or a theatre director or an actor?

JONATHAN
Oh, yes, I'm too young to start right away. I have to have an education first.

NATHANIEL
Suppose that wish couldn't be, then what would you wish?

JONATHAN
That you'd write me long letters and let me write you long letters.
[*Takes up his suit case.*
I'd better be going now.

NATHANIEL
Aren't you going to tell John and Aunt Letitia good-bye?

JONATHAN
No, sir. I don't think I'd better. Uncle John doesn't care and Aunt Letitia will understand.

NATHANIEL
Yes, she always understands somehow.

JONATHAN
Good-bye, sir.

NATHANIEL
Jonathan, suppose we go away together. I'm not wanted and you're not wanted.

JONATHAN
You're going to Paris to marry Mlle. Perrault!
NATHANIEL
Would you let me be your father, Jonathan?
JONATHAN
Sir?
NATHANIEL
You shall go to the schools where you will find the work you want. . . . Will you be my son?
JONATHAN
Do you like me that much?
NATHANIEL
I like you more than that much. You'll get some long trousers and we'll plan and plan. Suppose we run away together.
JONATHAN
Do you think we ought to leave some word, Uncle Nathaniel?
NATHANIEL
Of course. How stupid of me.
JONATHAN
You write it.
NATHANIEL
No, we'll both write it.
JONATHAN
I don't know what to say. I've only run away once.
NATHANIEL
So have I.
JONATHAN
Did you ever run away?
NATHANIEL
Yes — when I was eighteen.

JONATHAN
Oh!
NATHANIEL (*taking up paper*)
The message ought to be short.
JONATHAN
Why did you run away?
NATHANIEL
I wanted to write.
JONATHAN
You did!
NATHANIEL
Didn't you know I ran away?
JONATHAN
No, sir; they never would tell me what became of you.
NATHANIEL
They didn't know.
JONATHAN
How could you keep it from them?
NATHANIEL
I changed my name — Mr. Alexander Jefferson, Sr! What shall I say?
JONATHAN
I can't think. . . Did Uncle John lock you in?
NATHANIEL
No, I just ran away.
JONATHAN
How long did it take you to make up your mind to go?
NATHANIEL
I thought about it first when I was twelve. My father was still living then.
JONATHAN
Did you go to Somerset School?

NATHANIEL
Yes — for three years.
JONATHAN
What did you do after you ran away?
NATHANIEL
I had a very hard time, my boy — at first. I worked at anything I could get, then I got into a newspaper office, then I wrote "autobiographies" of famous men.
JONATHAN
I thought you had to write your own autobiography —
NATHANIEL
Not nowadays. Then I wrote some successful short stories, then some very successful long ones — and now I am independent; but it took me ten bitter years to make my first success. . . . What shall I write here?
JONATHAN
I never could think of things to say when I was going away.
NATHANIEL
Neither could I.
JONATHAN
Don't you think "good-bye" would be enough?
NATHANIEL (*writing*)
Capital. . . . "Good-Bye — Nathaniel." Now you sign it.
JONATHAN (*Signs*)
"Jonathan." . . . Maybe we ought to put a line under it so Aunt Letitia won't feel so bad.
NATHANIEL (*makes a line*)
Dear Aunt Letitia will understand. She is the blessed kind who always does. Now, where

shall we put it? . . . On John's chair, and maybe he'll understand too.

[*He pins the note to John's chair.*

JONATHAN

Don't you want to pack your things?

NATHANIEL

I'll wire for them.

[*Susan enters.*

On second thought, I'll ask Aunt Letitia to send them.

[*He goes out.*

JONATHAN

Hello, Susan.

SUSAN

Jonathan, I just saw Miss Letitia and she was crying. . . . What's the matter?

JONATHAN

I'm going away, Susan.

SUSAN

Where are you going?

JONATHAN

I'm going with Uncle Nathaniel. I'm going to be his son. And I'm going to a fine prep. school and learn to write and do what I like.

SUSAN

When are you coming back?

JONATHAN

I don't know. When I'm older maybe.

SUSAN

Can't we write any more songs?

JONATHAN

I'll send some words to you in letters.

SUSAN

Will you write every week?

JONATHAN
Yes. . . . Will you?
SUSAN
Yes. I wish I was going, too.
JONATHAN
So do I.
SUSAN
Maybe I'll come to see you graduate.
JONATHAN
That will be fine!
SUSAN (*She kisses him very simply*)
Good-bye, Jonathan.
JONATHAN
Good-bye, Susan.
SUSAN
I can hardly wait until you graduate.
JONATHAN
Neither can I. . . . Good-bye.
[*Nathaniel enters.*
NATHANIEL
On third thought, I decided to wire for my things.
SUSAN
Good-bye, Mr. Nathaniel. I hope you'll have a nice time.
NATHANIEL
Good-bye, Susan.
[*He kisses her. She goes out.*
JONATHAN
Good-bye, Susan.
SUSAN (*calling*)
Send me some picture postcards, Jonathan.
JONATHAN
I will.

[*He watches her.*

NATHANIEL (*Goes to window*)

Don't you want to make your wish on the new moon, Jonathan?

JONATHAN

I don't know what to wish now. The only one I could think of has come true.

NATHANIEL

Good . . . come, my boy.

JONATHAN

I'll write a long letter to Susan Sample every week.

NATHANIEL

You can write her a long letter from New York.

JONATHAN

And I can send her picture postcards from every place we go to.

[*Arm in arm they go out talking.*

The Curtain Falls.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A. M. PALMER — AUTHOR'S MATINEES

Madison Square Theater 1887

MARJORIE'S LOVERS	*Brander Matthews*
ELAINE (from Tennyson) ..	*G. P. Lathrop*
A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.	*W. D. Howells*

THE THEATER OF ARTS AND LETTERS

23rd Street Theater 1891

GILES COREY.....	*Mary E. Wilkins*
SQUIRREL INN (from Frank Stockton)	*Frank Presbrey*
THE OTHER WOMAN	*Richard Harding Davis*
HARVEST	*Clyde Fitch*
THE DECISION OF THE COURT	*Brander Matthews*
.....	*Frederick J. Stimson*

THE CRITERION INDEPENDENT THEATER

Madison Square Theater 1897

Berkeley Lyceum

JOHN GABRIEL BJORKMAN.	*Ibsen*
THE RIGHTS OF THE SOUL	*Giacosa*
THAT OVERCOAT	*Augustus Thomas*
FROM A CLEAR SKY	*Henri Dumay*
EL GRAN GALEOTO	*Echegaray*

APPENDIX

THE INDEPENDENT THEATER

Carnegie Lyceum 1899

El Gran Galeoto	*Echegaray*
Ties	*Hervieu*
The Master Builder	*Ibsen*
The Storm	*Ostrovsky*
The Heather Field	*Martyn*
A Troubadour	*Coppé*

THE NEW THEATER

1909–1911

First Season

Antony and Cleopatra	*Shakespeare*
The Cottage in the Air	*Knoblauch*
Strife	*Galsworthy*
The Nigger	*Sheldon*
The School for Scandal	*Sheridan*
Liz the Mother	*Fenn and Bryce*
Don	*Besier*
Twelfth Night	*Shakespeare*
The Witch (adapted from Scandinavian by	*Hagadorn (Wiers-Jenssen)*
Brand (act IV condensed)	*Ibsen*
Sister Beatrice	*Maeterlinck*
The Winter's Tale	*Shakespeare*
Beethoven	*Fauchois*

Second Season

The Blue Bird	*Maeterlinck*
The Merry Wives of Windsor	*Shakespeare*

THE THUNDERBOLT ..... *Pinero*
{ DON ..... *Besier*
{ SISTER BEATRICE ..... *Maeterlinck*
MARY MAGDALENE ..... *Maeterlinck*
OLD HEIDELBERG ..... *Meyer-Foerster*
VANITY FAIR ..... *R. Hichens and C. Gordan Lennox*
THE PIPER ..... *Marks*
NOBODY'S DAUGHTER ..... *Paston*
THE ARROW MAKER ..... *Austin*

In addition there was a borrowed production of
A SONG OF THE PEOPLE ... *Michaelis*

MISS GRACE GEORGE — THE PLAYHOUSE

The Playhouse 1915–1917

1st Season

THE NEW YORK IDEA ... *Mitchell*
THE LIARS ..... *Jones*
EARTH ..... *Fagan*
MAJOR BARBARA ..... *Shaw*
CAPTAIN BRASSBOUND'S CONVERSION ..... *Shaw*

2nd Season

EVE'S DAUGHTER ..... *Ramsey*
ELEVATION ..... *Bernstein*

WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYERS[1]

Bandbox and Comedy Theaters 1915–1917

INTERIOR ..... *Maeterlinck*

[1] Taken from Prof. Dickenson's book, "The Insurgent Theater," in which a number of interesting and more recent repertories of "independent" theaters are given.

EUGENICALLY SPEAKING ..	*Goodman*
LICENSED	*Lawrence*
ANOTHER INTERIOR	.....
LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR .	*Andreyev*
MOONDOWN	*Reed*
MY LADY'S HONOR.....	*Pemberton*
TWO BLIND BEGGARS AND ONE LESS BLIND	*Moeller*
THE SHEPHERD IN THE DISTANCE (pantomime) ...	*Hudson*
THE MIRACLE OF ST. ANTONY	*Maeterlinck*
IN APRIL	*Stokes*
FORBIDDEN FRUIT	*Feuillet*
SAVIOURS	*Goodman*
THE BEAR	*Tchekhov*
HELENA'S HUSBAND.....	*Moeller*
FIRE AND WATER	*White*
THE ANTICK	*MacKaye*
A NIGHT OF SNOWS	*Bracco*
LITERATURE	*Schnitzler*
THE HONOURABLE LOVER .	*Bracco*
WHIMS	*Musset*
OVERTONES	*Gerstenberg*
THE CLOD	*Beach*
THE ROAD-HOUSE IN ARDEN	*Moeller*
THE TENOR	*Wedekind*
THE RED CLOAK (pantomime)	*Meyer*
CHILDREN	*Bolton and Carlton*
THE AGE OF REASON ...	*Dorrian*
THE MAGICAL CITY	*Akins*
MONSIEUR PIERRE PATELIN	

APPENDIX

AGLAVAINE AND SELYSETTE	*Maeterlinck*
THE SEA GULL	*Tchekhov*
A MERRY DEATH	*Evréinev*
LOVER'S LUCK	*Porto-Riche*
THE SUGAR HOUSE	*Brown*
SISTERS OF SUSANNA	*Moeller*
BUSHIDO	*Izumo*
TRIFLES	*Glaspell*
ANOTHER WAY OUT	*Langner*
ALTRUISM	*Ettlinger*
THE DEATH OF TINTAGILES	*Maeterlinck*
THE LAST STRAW	*Crocker*
THE HERO OF SANTA MARIA	*Goodman and Hecht*
IMPUDENCE	*Auernheimer*
PLOTS AND PLAYWRIGHTS	*Massey*
THE LIFE OF MAN	*Andreyev*
SGANARELLE	*Molière*
THE POOR FOOL	*Bahr*
GHOSTS	*Ibsen*
PARIAH	*Strindberg*

REPERTORY OF THE STUART WALKER COMPANY

THE TRIMPLET	*Walker*
A FAN AND TWO CANDLESTICKS	*MacMillan*
SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL	*Walker*
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The Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree

CAST FOR OPENING

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O-Katsu	*Annie Lowry*
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The Gaki of Kokoru	*McKay Morris*
Aoyagi	*Nancy Winston*
Riki	*Wilmot Heitland*

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CAST FOR OPENING

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She	*Dorothea Carothers*
Boy	*Gregory Kelly*

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NEW YORK CAST

Aunt Letitia	*Elizabeth Patterson*
Susan Sample	*Beatrice Maude*
Uncle Nathaniel	*George Gaul*
Uncle John	*Ainsworth Arnold*
Jonathan	*Gregory Kelly*
Mlle. Perrault	*Margaret Mower*
Hank	*Edgar Stehli*
Albert Peet	*Joseph Graham*
Mary	*Elizabeth Black*
John III	*John Talbott*

First produced at the *Murat Theatre*, Indianapolis, August 12, 1918.

APPENDIX

At the *Princess Theatre*, New York première, September 11, 1918, Elizabeth Patterson played Aunt Letitia, which was played in Indianapolis by Judith Lowry.

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